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ABSTRACT

This report describes significant changes which have taken place in the public schools of Jefferson County, Colorado, and discusses issues which affect the quality of education in the county's school district. After a brief introduction, the report profiles the Jefferson County Public School District, presents information about the county's public school system in 1990-91, and discusses goals for change in the future. The report examines research that could be used as a basis for these changes. The research focuses on the grade ranges of preschool to third grade and middle school, and on the issue of class size. Additional issues facing Jefferson County Schools are: (1) accountability and accreditation; (2) staff development; (3) readiness to learn; (4) exceptional student services; (5) alternative programs for high school completion; (6) alternatives to public school education; and (7) community-school relations. A list of 49 references and appendices presenting information related to the Jefferson County Public School District are provided. (MM)

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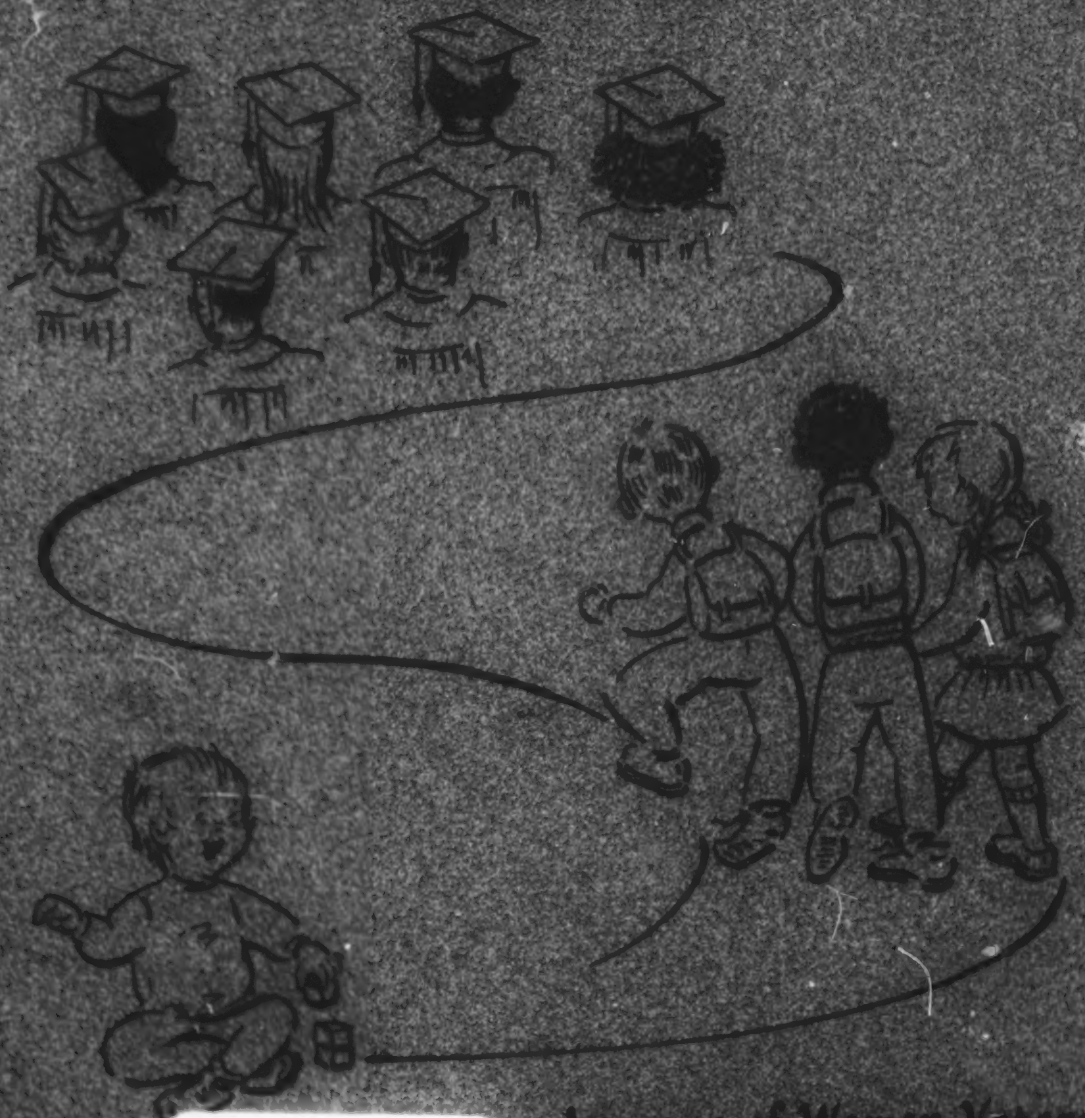

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EDUCATION IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

THE CHANGING SCENE

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AUTHORIZATION

In April, 1991, the members of the League of Women Voters of Jefferson County decided to study selected issues related to the quality of education in Jefferson County. In determining the scope of this report an effort has been made to avoid duplication of the work of other community groups.

This report is printed on recycled paper.

INTRODUCTION

There is widespread concern about the quality of education and the decline in student achievement as the 21st century approaches. This is regarded by some as threatening our competitive stance in the global marketplace (SCANS Report, 1991). It also threatens a democratic form of government which depends upon a citizenry literate enough to make informed choices (Natriello, Pallas, and McDill, 1987).

The first of a series of national meetings to discuss educational reform in the United States was convened in Colorado in June, 1991 by President Bush and Governor Romer. More than 6,700 citizens participated at 141 sites in Colorado. The campaign, "Colorado 2000", focused on six education goals to be achieved by the year 2000. The impetus for the movement came from the fifty Governors of the States who were concerned that recent studies showed that the educational deficiencies of students were creating a nation at risk.

The National Commission on Education suggested that, "If an unfriendly power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today we would have viewed it as an act of war. . . We have in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament" (U.S. National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

The National Commission on Children found that, "Fewer than half of American 17 year-olds who are in school possess the skills and basic knowledge required for college and many entry-level jobs. . . Only 59 percent can compute with decimals, fractions, and percents or solve simple equations. . . Assessments of 20 school systems around the world rank American eighth graders 10th in arithmetic, 12th in algebra, and 16th in geometry. . . Even America's top students fare poorly in international comparisons: among the top 1 percent of high school seniors, American students ranked last" (U. S. National Commission on Children, 1991).

The U.S Secretary of Education has said that American education is "dreadfully inadequate" (*Washington Post*, January 12, 1990), and, in addition the criticism has been made that the present system perpetuates the existence of an educational under-class (U.S.National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

On the other hand, a draft report from the Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico suggests that "much of the current reform agenda, though well intentioned is misguided. . . Based on a 'crisis' mentality, many proposed reforms do not focus on actual problems" (Carson, Huelskamp and Woodall, 1991). The Sandia researchers concluded that high school completion rates are not falling, that the decline in college-entrance examination scores is due to a wider range of students taking such tests, and that the increase of educational expenditures over the past 20 years has gone almost entirely to special education.

A review of the Sandia Report in *Education Week* suggests that "Much of the nonproductive rhetoric surrounding education today is based on improper use of simplistic data. . . Many stakeholders are attempting to use the education system as a scapegoat for a perceived lack of U.S. economic competitiveness in world markets. . . By focusing on isolated shortages, such as Ph.Ds in mathematics, some groups are predicting an impending critical 'shortfall' in advanced technical degrees. . . Isolated shortages will occur, but market forces will respond". The director of policy research and analysis for the National Science Foundation, Peter House, is quoted as criticizing the conclusions of the Sandia report noting the report includes few references and sources and no definitions of terms and categories. House says the report does not reflect a "full understanding of relevant reported research . . . the narrative does not constitute a cohesive analysis, and the conclusions presented are not adequately supported" (Miller, 1991).

Any discussion of issues related to the quality of education should acknowledge the importance of teacher training. There is a "natural connection between good teachers and good schools . . . insufficient attention has been paid to the recruitment, education, and support of the men and women who are essential to school renewal" (Goodlad, 1990). The scope of this report does not include evaluating standards for teacher training and certification which are mandated at the state and national levels by Schools of Education and by State Departments of Education. However, acknowledging the concern herein is essential.

There is consensus that significant problems exist in education, and community debates across the nation have been heated. Such is also the case in Colorado and in Jefferson County. The Jefferson County Public School District is the largest in the state and the 27th largest in the United States. In 1987 and 1990 proposals for mill levy increases were defeated by the voters of Jefferson County. In 1989 a proposed bond issue and a mill levy increase were defeated. The last mill levy increase approved by the voters was in 1983 and the last bond issue approved was in 1985. Compounding financial problems, there is an expected $200 million shortfall in funding for education by the State of Colorado in 1991-1992. Within the District, issues of credibility, financial management, community involvement in the schools and communication have been identified as significant problems. Many committees and task forces are at work evaluating needs, setting goals, and planning implementation of these new goals.

This report discusses significant changes which have taken place recently within Jefferson County Public Schools and selected issues which effect the quality of education in the District. The issues chosen for disussion include accountability and accreditation, staff development, early childhood education, services for exceptional students, alternative programs for high school completion, alternatives to public school education, and community relations.

PROFILE OF CHANGE IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

BACKGROUND

The Jefferson County Public School District was established in 1950 when the 39 school districts in Jefferson County merged and there were a total of 9,100 students enrolled (A Guide to The District, 1991). The total Jefferson County population in 1950 was 55,682 (U.S. Census Bureau).

By 1961 the District was the second largest in the state with 37,252 students, and 1,490 teachers who received salaries ranging between $4,400 and $8,175 for nine months (depending on their level of education and experience). The total budget was $14,843,847 for 82 schools. Operating costs were about $332 per student (LWV Jefferson County, 1961).

By 1977 Jefferson County's population had grown to over 324,000 and enrollment peaked at 81,659 students. The average salary of the 4,300 teachers was $14,100. The total budget was $163,347,215 and operating costs per pupil were $1,800 (LWV Jefferson County, 1978). Enrollment slowly declined from 1977 to 1989 when there were 75,164 students. Since 1989 enrollment has again increased.

JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1991

Today serving a Jefferson County population of more than 438,430, the Jefferson County School District has 79,325 students, 3,300 more than in the fall of 1990 (U.S. Census, 1990; JCPS District Enrollment Statistics, 1991). While increases are particularly evident in the north and south area schools, growth has

occurred at all levels and in all areas of the County, necessitating the addition of 63 new temporaries rather than the 42 anticipated. There are over 11,000 students housed in temporary facilities. The 1991 Annual Student Housing Report projects an increase of 5,334 students by 1996. However, if present trends continue, the increase will be greater. (JCPS Annual Student Housing Report, 1991).

The County encompasses 783 square miles and includes parts of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and the westernmost Great Plains, including a portion of the Denver metropolitan area. There are 83 elementary schools, 17 junior high schools, 14 senior high schools, Warren Occupational Technical Center, the Charles McLain Community High School, and two alternative schools (Dennison Fundamental and Jefferson County Open School). An open enrollment policy allows students to attend any school in the District at which space is available. Seventy-four percent of graduates continue their education upon completion of high school.

In 1991-1992 the District serves 7,946 students ages 3-18 with special intellectual, emotional, physical, or educational needs (Tucker, interview). These students attend schools as close to their homes as possible or at Fletcher Miller Special School which serves those who are physically and multiply handicapped.

In October 1991 Jefferson County Public Schools employed 4,378 teachers, 62 percent with master's or higher degrees, and 364 administrators. There is a total of 6,720 full time employees and 3,320 part-time employees (JCPS Employee Count, October 1991). Teachers' salaries range from $18,841 to $56,178, the average being $39,453 (Tucker, interview). Operating costs are estimated at $3,589 per student.

A recent study by the Colorado Public Expenditure Council based on 1989 data found that Jefferson County central administration costs (superintendent, assistant superintendents, and their staffs) are the lowest of 13 Denver metropolitan school districts ($30 per pupil). Jefferson County ranked 9th from the top in costs for school administration (principals, assistant principals, and staff). Overall, Jefferson County Public Schools spends $322 per pupil (6.7 percent of the total budget) on administration, the next to the lowest of the metropolitan districts (Morson, Rocky Mountain News).

The 1991 District Budget is $332,515,000. Increased enrollment and state mandated requirements for students enrolled in special education account for the largest part of the increase in per pupil costs since 1977. Insurance and health benefit costs also contribute to the increase (Tucker, interview). Still, the District's general operating expense per pupil is lower than 11 of the 14 metropolitan Denver districts.

Jefferson County Public Schools received almost $6 million from the federal government for the calendar year 1990 and $158,289,000 from the State (Tucker, interview). The proportion of residents' property tax going to the school district has decreased in recent years.

The five member Board of Education (elected by the citizens of Jefferson County) sets policy for the school district and hires the superintendent. Reflecting new policy directions adopted by the Board, administrative responsibilities are in the process of being reorganized and positions reassigned. With the new focus on cooperative decision making and local accountability, some central administrative staff members have returned to classroom teaching and others have become resource staff in one of the four geographical divisions of the District, north, south, central and west. Specialists in fields such as language, art or music have been reassigned. It is not clear how their expertise will be shared throughout the District.

A chart illustrating lines of responsibility within the District can be found in Appendix A. The chart is a "draft" as of the time this report goes to press. Superintendent of Schools, Lewis W. Finch, comments

that the system (and hence the chart) is flexible and subject to changes. While the present responsibilities of many administrators have been ascertained for this report, there remain a significant number listed on the chart whose duties have not been explored.

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF CHANGE

More than numbers has changed since 1950. The U. S. National Commission on Children, created by Congress and the President in 1987 to assess the status of children and families in the U.S. and to propose new directions for policy and program development, identified changes in society that contribute to vulnerability of children and families:

- One in four children nationally is raised by one parent, usually a divorced or unmarried mother
- One in five lives below or near poverty level
- One-half million babies are born yearly to teenage girls
- Violence and the use of drugs have increased

The report concluded that the needs of children and families must be addressed or the future prospects of the nation are threatened. The proposed agenda for the 1990s is based on principles concerning children's basic needs, parents' roles and responsibilities and society's obligations, embodying greater emphasis on family values and more effective intervention. The agenda includes:

- Developing a comprehensive income security plan
- Improving health care programs
- Increasing educational achievement by ensuring that every child enters school ready to learn and every school meets the educational needs of all its students
- Preparing adolescents for adulthood
- Strengthening and supporting families
- Protecting vulnerable children and their families
- Bringing greater cohesion and efficiency to the delivery of public health and social services
- Creating a moral climate for children.

Specific recommendations for increasing educational achievement include: high-quality early childhood experiences so that children start school ready to learn; a rigorous curriculum; school-based management; accountability measures; recruitment and retraining of skilled teachers and effective principals; improved school environments, and equitable financing; school choice; multidisciplinary initiatives for children with serious handicaps and multiple needs; steps to emphasize the personal rewards and long-term benefits of high academic achievement, hard work, and perseverance (U. S. National Commission on Children, 1991).

Lamm and Caldwell (1990) argue that "the reasons children are not learning and are not competitive on an international level are found more outside the classroom than inside. The roots of our educational failure lie mainly in a deterioration of American values and culture, in the breakdown of the family in all socioeconomic categories and in anti-education attitudes that pervade certain subcultures."

Caldwell has prepared a chart, *The Value Shift*, which is replicated in Appendix B of this report. The chart summarizes Caldwell's views of shifts in national focus during the last 40 years. Lamm and Caldwell write that "the values of industrious labor and thrift and the values of the Protestant work ethic . . . were replaced. . . We have become a society that cares more about spending than saving, more about personal pleasure than community, more about leveraged buyouts than investment in the future, and more about instant fame than lasting achievement. It is not lack of talent or some inherent inferiority,

it is lack of values in a supportive cultural context that too often results in failure." Americans need to start to think about quality and long-term success. "Countries (and subcultures) that stress education, economic and political freedom, delayed gratification, mutual trust and hard work create wealth. Those that do not stay poor".

Lamm and Caldwell foresee a struggle over which values will dominate our national life. "Either we are moving toward a new synthesis between traditional commitments and new forms of personal fulfillment, or we are approaching a fragmented, atomic society, wherein the family is a shambles, the work ethic has collapsed, personal freedom is restricted, and economy is increasingly uncompetitive. . . Schools can do only so much to counter broad cultural trends. Schools can reinforce values, but they cannot correct for all cultural deficiencies. We must not allow negative cultural forces to overwhelm the best parts of the American experience."

Mobility and Change

A characteristic of our present life style with significant impact on the ability of a child to learn is our mobility. One school in the District noted a 25 point difference in test scores between new students and students who have been in the school for at least three years. Families move in and out of the District as well as within the District. Mobility is calculated by dividing all who leave a school or the District by the total of the beginning enrollment and all incoming transfers. In 1990-1991, 9,500 students left Jefferson County schools and the beginning enrollment plus incoming transfers equalled 84,000. Therefore, 11 percent mobility was experienced. Mobility varies from school to school and ranged from 2 percent in a very stable school to 26 percent in a central area school. By December some children have already been in six different schools. Encouraging open enrollment and having liberal transfer policies contribute to mobility. Teachers use techniques such as the buddy system, newcomer's clubs and home visits to help new students adjust to their new school.

What are the implications of mobility on the accountability process? Much emphasis is being placed on responsibility and accountability at the local school level. How can local administrators be held accountable for the test results of students they have only had for a short time? How should the effort spent on integrating new students be balanced with the time spent on other students?

VISIONS FOR CHANGE: What do we want to change?

COLORADO 2000

In response to the nationally commissioned studies designed to evaluate the problems of our educational system, six national goals were formulated. President Bush, Governor Romer, and the Governors of the other forty-nine States pledged to hold themselves accountable for achieving the six educational goals by the year 2000. In conjunction with "Colorado 2000" there have been a series of meetings and task forces have been formed to plan implementation of the six goals.

The six national goals (Romer, 1991) for the year 2000 are:

GOAL ONE: All children will start school ready to learn.

GOAL TWO: The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent for all groups.

GOAL THREE: All students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning and productive employment in our modern economy.

GOAL FOUR: U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

GOAL FIVE: Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

GOAL SIX: Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

The Jefferson Foundation and Education 2000

The Jefferson Foundation was established in 1984 by citizens, the business community and the public school system. The mission of the Foundation is to "provide private initiative to develop and fund programs expanding educational opportunities for students and to sponsor innovation and improvement in public education" (Lyons, interview). The office of the Foundation is located in the Jefferson County Public Schools Educational Services Center.

The Jefferson Foundation was organized by a group of citizens in Jefferson County who wanted to work with the public schools to address educational issues of combined interest to the public and private sector. A major goal was to broaden ownership of public schools to include civic, cultural and business institutions within the community (Jefferson Foundation Education 2000 pamphlet). In the early 1980's, similar foundations were springing up across the United States in response to proposed tax-limitation measures impacting public schools. Individuals who were concerned about funding for schools banded together to fund projects in their local school districts. The Foundation is a 501 (C) (3) nonprofit organization.

In 1988, the Jefferson Foundation, the Jeffco Chamber of Commerce and the Jeffco Board of Realtors initiated "Education 2000", an effort to study the needs of public education in the County. In 1990, the Education 2000 Committee issued their report, *A Call for Change*, which set forth recommendations to:

- Implement a system of site-based management and shared decision-making to increase community/parent involvement and student achievement
- Increase community involvement as a means of promoting a sense of public ownership and to expand opportunities for student learning
- Develop curriculum to improve student achievement
- Strengthen communications to enhance understanding
- Support educators: "Their skills are the key to change".

In 1991, the Jefferson Foundation, working with other community groups and agencies as well as the Jefferson County Board of Education published *A Call For Action* and committed to the following projects:

· EXPLORING CAREERS IN TECHNOLOGY. A program for grades 5-12 to explore uses of technology in career fields which involves field based experience, working with business and community leaders. The fund raising goal is $12,000.

· SCHOOL CENTERED COOPERATIVE DECISION MAKING. Providing grants to plan and evaluate shared decision making within individual schools. The fund raising goal is $20,000.

· SCHOLARSHIPS FOR JEFFCO R-1 STAFF. These scholarships are for currently employed administrators, teachers and classified personnel. Applicant must specify how the particular training they seek will benefit the school or department. This project is intended to support individual initiative within a context of institutional change. The fund raising goal is $50,000.

· BUSINESS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS. The plan is to develop a directory and computer data base for partnership use. A school/business exchange is being set up. The fund raising goal is $7,000.

· LINKING HOME AND SCHOOL. A variety of strategies for more effective communication between home and school will be researched including home-school liaisons and expansion of the teacher's role. The fund raising goal is $50,000.

· COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT. A project to explore community service for R-1 students. The fund raising goal $2,000.

· SISTER SCHOOLS. A project to research the concept of pairing schools to serve mutually identified needs by sharing resources.

· EDUCATION 2000 SCHOOLS. To encourage schools to implement the recommendations from the Education 2000 Report. Fund raising goal is $2,000.

"Business Education Partnerships" involves various Jefferson County Chambers of Commerce, the school district, and the Foundation in assembling a directory and computer data base for business-school partnerships. To date, 350 teachers and 75 businesses in the County are participating. The purpose is to acquaint students with the work place, to help them acquire skills needed in business, and to assist classroom teachers in integrating curriculum with a student's personal goals. Students can go to the workplace and business people are invited to participate in the classroom. Internships will be created and students will "shadow" a professional at work for a day or so. Most teachers do not have the time to arrange for outside people to augment or instruct a class and access to business internships is often limited. A directory and computer data base will facilitate partnerships.

Additional opportunities for businesses and the school system to interact might be provided through seminars given for business employees at their workplaces and taught by school personnel--including teachers, school counselors, and specialists. This plan would further the Jefferson Foundation's goal of reciprocity between schools and business as each helps the other.

A Call for Action is a provocative document. It includes recommendations on: the use of volunteers within the school system; the importance of site-based school cooperative decision making; "inadequate" teacher training; inflexible curriculum; diversity of cultural trends within the community; and most importantly, the necessity of preparing students for a changing world. The responsibilities of parents, students and school are all noted and thoughtful solutions are presented.

A Vision For Jefferson County Schools

On August 15, 1991 the Jefferson County Board of Education adopted *Serving Students, A Vision for Jefferson County Public Schools*, a statement of beliefs, and appointed task forces to implement these beliefs. The Board endorsed these as follows:

- *Students and their proficiencies are the central focus of this district. We value the full development of the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical potential of each individual, regardless of ethnic and cultural background, sex, or socio-economic status.*
- *We value student, parent, staff and community involvement that models democratic processes and leads to mutual commitment and shared responsibility.*
- *We recognize the unique developmental needs of early adolescents, and we endorse a transition from the junior high to the middle school concept.*
- *We endorse the concept of balance and flexibility by allocating District resources on the basis of student needs.*
- *We endorse the integration of academic and vocational education at all grade levels.*
- *We believe that the primary purpose of assessment is to diagnose student needs and to measure students' attainment of proficiencies. We will develop additional means to measure more fully the wide spectrum of student performance, client satisfaction and program effectiveness.*
- *We value the accountability process and accept responsibility to be accountable to the public.*
- *Continuous staff development is essential to the accomplishment of our mission as a school district.*
- *We recognize that meaningful staff performance review and professional growth are interrelated and are essential to effective schools.*
- *We are committed to a greater investment in technology, which must be integrated throughout the educational process and structure.*
- *The central administration of the District exists to provide service to the schools and other work sites in meeting the needs of students.*
- *We are committed to join our citizens and local and state agencies in cooperative efforts to address community issues of 1) ensuring children's readiness to learn; 2) achieving adult literacy: and 3) providing safe, drug-free schools.*

Steps for implementing each of the above statements were listed. For example, steps for implementing the final statement include:

> *The District will continue the pre-school language development program, special education pre-school, parent pre-kindergarten program, before and after school child care, school-based parenting programs, and even start. The District will continue age-appropriate developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention programs for all students. The District will continue student assistance programs, DARE in all elementary schools, and cooperation as a member of the Prevention Task Force.*

RESEARCH AND CHANGE: Are we using what we know?

Jefferson County School curriculum has traditionally been implemented in terms of district programs. With current change, the shift is to a student focus. The changes being made are in response to the growing body of researched information about cognitive processes and child development, each contributing to a better understanding of how children learn most effectively. Learning is a highly personal and individually constructed experience based on the interest, needs, and developmental level

of the student. *When* and *how* learning occurs is unique to the child. This means that the process of teaching must be flexible. It is recognized that not all children are ready to read, write, and calculate at a specific chronological age and not all children learn at the same pace (Morgan, interview).

Goals of education are also being re-examined. Students must be educated for a rapidly changing world in which revolutions in communication, science, and business are happening. Developing skills to access, process and synthesize information are of prime importance. Basic tools for a lifetime of learning include reading skills, basic math concepts, and reasoning skills. Learning and working together within peer groups constitute essential preparation for a century that will require cooperation to live successfully on the planet.

PRESCHOOL TO THIRD GRADE

Ideas about how children three to eight years of age learn most effectively have elicited considerable debate. One philosophical approach has emphasized that young children (birth to eight years of age) have characteristic developmental learning styles and learn best when they are involved physically, intellectualy, socially, and emotionally in the process of learning. Experiential learning is emphasized. This approach has been referred to as a "child development point of view" because of the emphasis on age-related developmental patterns. (Piaget in Labinowicz, 1980; Elkind, 1987; Katz, 1989).

An opposing theory stresses drill, rote learning, teacher directed activities, and a set curriculum. Acquisition of specific academic skills through drill and repetition at the child's desk or in small groups is emphasized.

In 1988, a pilot program for preschool, kindergarten, first and second grades (PreK-2) was initiated in the Jefferson County Public Schools which took into account the "developmental point of view". Fifty elementary schools (out of 83) are presently participants in this program. Active exploration and experiential learning are emphasized in a program based on student needs. In this context, children are not expected to sit still for long periods of time and complete seatwork. This program reflects the county-wide shift within the school system from program based curriculum to one that is student focused.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

New research on the development of early adolescents (10-15 years old) indicates that there are important developmental characteristics which merit attention.

Boys and girls 10-15 years old are more mature both physically and socially than were their grandparents. They have had a more sophisticated exposure to the world than previous generations. These are years of significant change in the development of thinking, but can also be a time when relationships between ideas are not clearly understood. Peer groups become important even earlier than a generation ago and the need for independence develops sooner. Rejection of adult values often leads to challenging parental values. Strong relationships may develop with adults outside the home. The search for an independent identity and emancipation is begun. Young adolescents experience restlessness, mood swings and have a very short attention span. It is also a time when interests multiply extravagantly, but are often short-lived, and wide swings in physical energy are experienced.

Rapid physical, mental and emotional changes make this a critical period of development--a time when one of four adolescents is vulnerable to multiple high-risk behaviors (drugs, alcohol, pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease) and school failure. The same fraction of students is found to be at moderate risk.

Enlightened educational experiences consistent with the growth and development of young adolescent students can reduce that rate of risk.

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) calls for middle schools that:

1. Create small communities for learning with close relationships with adults and peers, exemplified by team teachers and small advisory groups.
2. Teach a core academic program.
3. Insure success for all students.
4. Empower teachers and administrators to make decisions about the experiences of middle grade students.
5. Staff middle grade schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents.
6. Improve academic performance through fostering health and fitness.
7. Re-engage families in the education of young adolescents.
8. Connect school with communities.

For many years, junior high schools relied on modified high school teaching techniques to ease students into the routine of high school. However, it was found that young adolescents learn best when moving about, talking, and working cooperatively in small groups as opposed to the old dictum "sit down, sit still and shut up". While middle schools still serve as a place of transition, new practices are more consistent with knowledge about the developmental characteristics of the population they serve.

Teaching elements which are successful for early adolescents include (George, 1989):

1. An "Advisor-Advisee Program" in which the teacher isn't a "mommy" or a stranger, but a special friend.
2. "Interdisciplinary Teacher Organization" which shares the responsibility for cooperatively planning instruction across disciplines.
3. "Skills Through Exploration", providing a hands-on curriculum while avoiding large doses of subject matter.
4. "Block Schedules", wherein the day is divided into several large blocks of time.
5. "Balanced Instruction" where teachers neither "wipe their students' noses" or treat them as though they were mature adults.
6. "Multi-age Grouping" on a team which stays together for two or more years and really gets to know each other.
7. "Team Areas" where teachers and students on the team spend most of their time every day.
8. "Interest-based Activities" involving everyone who wants to be involved. Rewards are not distributed just to those whose earlier maturation or abilities allow them to dominate their peers.

Appendix C shows some of the techniques being used in middle schools in contrast to the more traditional programs given for elementary and high schools.

Since the Jeffco Junior High Improvement Project began in 1987, many middle school concepts have been implemented throughout the District. Thirteen junior high schools are organized with teacher-teams. Other schools are considering team teaching and developing interdisciplinary activities. A majority of schools offer exploratory programs in specific areas such as art, vocal music, technical arts, home arts, computers, business, and health. Intramural athletic programs have been added or strengthened and partnerships with several recreation districts initiated. A parent education component is in place in many schools. Middle level foreign language curriculum are being developed to allow semester offerings in

some schools. There is a revised summer school program which includes work experience and life-skill components. Finally, the District has a Middle Level Consultant under the Assistant Superintendent for Effective Schools.

Creighton Junior High School is in its third year of implementing middle school concepts for its 7th and 8th grade students. The biggest change is team teaching. Whereas three years ago, students could have had up to 18 different teachers during the course of one year, 7th and 8th graders now spend four hours a day with a core team of four teachers for language arts, social studies, math and science. The four teachers truly get to know the students and can plan interdisciplinary projects. Two hours of each day are spent with a team coordinating the exploratory program and one hour in a student advisement group which deals with leadership, study skills, conflict mediation and community service. Block scheduling should go into effect in 1992. The impact of middle school methods on achievement and school atmosphere will be documented and shared with the community before Creighton actually declares itself a middle school.

In August 1991, a task force was commissioned by the Board of Education to study the transition to the middle school and make recommendations about components which should exist in all middle level schools.

CLASS SIZE: A Significant Variable in Effective Learning

Optimal student/teacher ratios vary with age of student, developmental needs, and with degree of disability (if any). Colorado State licensing regulations for child care centers which serve infants, toddlers, and children 3 to 5 years old reflect researched conclusions about appropriate group size at each developmental level. However, Colorado state regulations reflect a minimum ratio of adult to child rather than an optimum ratio.

In 1986 Robinson and Wittebols prepared a summary of current research on optimal class size. They concluded that the "grades that show the most promising effects of small classes (22 or less) on pupil learning are the early primary grades (kindergarten to third grade). At this grade level, 50 percent of the studies (reviewed) found that pupil achievement, particularly in reading and mathematics, was higher in smaller classes." However, "when the . . . research moves to the junior grades 4-8, a weaker and more modest relationship between class size (less than 22) and pupil achievement is found. At this grade level, 38.1 percent of the studies found that pupil achievement was higher in smaller classes".

While studies in specific subject areas in the upper grades are limited in both number and quality, data suggest that for most pupils above the primary grades, changes in class size between 23 to 30 pupils have little impact; and the impact on student achievement decreases as grade level increases. It was also noted that little, if any increase in pupil achievement can be expected from reducing class size (below 22 pupils) if teachers continue to use the same instructional methods and procedures in the smaller classes that they use in the larger classes (Robinson, 1990).

Glass and Smith (1978) found that it was difficult to gauge the effect of class size as there are so many other variables including previous achievement, socio-economic status, and ability. The most dramatic effect of smaller classes was on the teachers' morale, attitude toward students, absences, satisfaction, workload, and professional growth.

The focus on individual student achievement poses a monumental challenge to teachers with large classes. Jefferson County Schools propose to address class size through better use of resources, more teamwork

among teachers, more efficient use of community talent, more enrichment education for teachers, cooperation within the District and more use of volunteers (Dawson, interview). For example, retired people volunteer as tutors in elementary schools on a regular basis in the Oasis Program. Current staffing practices provide for average class sizes of 24 pupils in kindergarten through 2nd grade, 28 pupils in grades 3 through 6, and a maximum of 150 pupils a day (30 per class) in secondary schools (Carle, interview).

At all stages of development, the opportunity for a student to interact, communicate and develop a personal relationship with a well-trained teacher-tutor is of critical importance. It has been suggested that more important than what is taught (curriculum) and how it is taught (methodology) is the quality of the inter-personal relationship between student and teacher in nurturing enthusiasm for learning.

CHANGE IN MOTION

Insuring that students come to school motivated, able and ready to learn is a shared responsiblity of parents, families, the local community, and a support system of state and federal services. A "healthy start", a "head start", and a support system in place throughout the school years is a broad based challenge. A child who comes to school ill-nourished and preoccupied with survival issues is not ready to learn--at four years of age or at fourteen.

In selecting issues to study from the multitude which currently face Jefferson County Schools, the Jefferson County League of Women Voters' Committee on Education has chosen seven: 1) accountability and accreditation; 2) staff development; 3) early childhood education 4) exceptional student services; 5) alternative programs for high school completion; 6) alternatives to public school education; and, 7) community/school relations. Two of these issues address national goals discussed earlier in this report--Goal One, readiness to learn and Goal Five, adult literacy.

ISSUE 1: ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACCREDITATION

Accountability and accreditation are two of the processes used by the schools and their communities to set goals and evaluate progress made in achieving those goals. The Colorado State Constitution provides for an elected State Board of Education responsible for the general supervision of Colorado's public school system. The Board establishes policy for the Department of Education, accredits Colorado school districts, sets standards for teacher education and certification, submits recommendations for educational improvements to the General Assembly and the Governor, and distributes state and federal school funds.

The Colorado Public School Finance Act of 1988, requires the State Board to adopt goals and objectives for improving Colorado education state-wide. These goals, adopted in 1988, concern graduation rate, attendance rate, and achievement. Part 2 of the School Finance Act of 1988 mandates new requirements for accountability in long-range planning for educational improvement which involve the total community including staff, students, parents and community members. The law requires that each school establish an advisory accountability committee to define, in cooperation with the principal and staff, goals and plans in keeping with state and local board objectives of improving graduation rates, attendance rates and student achievement.

Accountability Committees

Since 1973 Jefferson County public schools have had local, area and district advisory committees, which addressed school improvement and accountability. Beginning in the fall of 1991, each school's group will be called a school accountability committee, which, in addition to providing a link with the community and advising the principal, will approve an annual school improvement plan prepared in cooperation with the principal and staff. An example of one school's accountability plan is given in Appendix D. It is the principal's responsibility to implement the accountability process in the school and to provide the community with an evaluation of the school's educational performance each year.

The membership of the school's accountability committee should be representative of the school community and should include at least one parent, one teacher, one school administrator and one non-parent community member. Students (grades 6 to 12) should be included whenever appropriate. The committee should also be balanced consistent with the racial/ethnic/gender characteristics of the area it serves. The average number of members per school accountability committee in 1989-1990 was 13.6.

The second level of citizen input in the accountability process consists of *area* accountability committees. Each of the four geographical areas (north, west, south and central) in the District has one or more area accountability committees. The Area Accountability Committee is composed of parents and staff from each school which feeds into the high school(s) included in the area. For example, the Central Area has one "Area" Committee including representatives from Jefferson, Lakewood and Wheat Ridge high schools and all the related feeder schools; while the West Area has three separate "Area" Committees, Green Mountain Accountability Committee, Golden Accountability Committee and the Mountain Area Forum. In addition to parents and staff from each school, Area Committees also have non-parent community members, and student representatives. The Area Committee is responsible for an annual review and summary of the area schools' accountability plans. This summary together with each school's plan and report are forwarded to the District Accountability Committee and the Board of Education.

The District Accountability Committee is composed of one representative of each high school articulation area (geographic area from which the high school draws students), selected from the area accountability committees, one representative selected from the District PTA Council, and additional members at large, appointed by the Board of Education to ensure representation of the community. The District Committee consults with the Board regarding the development of the District's goals and plan, and prepares and submits a summary of school accountability plans (which have been reviewed by the Area Committees) to the Jefferson County Board of Education.

The *1991-1992 District Accountability Plan: Implementing "Serving Students: A Vision for Jefferson County Public Schools"* uses the Jefferson County School Board's belief statements and incorporates the state and national goals. While the District Accountability Plan focuses on district-wide steps for implementation, there is an interdependence between the individual school and District accountability plans which will be mutually beneficial in meeting the goals. Appendix E illustrates the accountability process in Jefferson County Public Schools.

Accreditation Review

Colorado evaluates districts for accreditation every three years. The Colorado Department of Education's "Partnership Assistance Review Team" visited all Jefferson County schools for an "accreditation review" in April, 1991. The effectiveness of the accountability process was one area reviewed. Other areas reviewed were: district compliance with Colorado's statutes and accreditation rules; the performance of

students in each of the schools; and the equity of student performances. Additional compliance requirements include: representative district committees, measureable goals in school improvement plans, meeting reporting deadlines, specific written policies and plans, minimum graduation requirements, qualified school staff, and meeting requirements for food services and transportation. The District was last accredited in November 1991.

The chief consequences of state non-accreditation would be the negative publicity generated and concern of Jefferson County citizenry as the District would still receive funding from the State. While unlikely, the Commissioner of Education could request that the President of the Jefferson County Board of Education reorganize the District.

North Central Association

Each secondary school (junior, middle and senior high school) is evaluated every seven years by the North Central Association, with year of evaluation varying from school to school. The school's staff and community compile a self-assessment and identify what they hope to achieve. A North Central Team then comes to the school to evaluate the program and help the school community achieve the goals which have been selected. Staff qualifications, media center adequacy, per student budget allocation, and other factors are evaluated. Each school submits a yearly update and receives certification if requirements are met. The philosophy is to help schools achieve established goals. Jefferson County staff reciprocate as team members in the evaluation of other districts, thereby reducing the cost of the process.

ISSUE 2: STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In an effort to meet the challenges that educational change is presenting to staff, Jefferson County R-1 schools have set new goals for the 6,720 full-time and 3,320 part-time employees. The thrust of change is to shift from a staff development program which was based on sharing curriculum innovations with teachers to one which is focused on student achievement or proficiencies--a basic shift from emphasizing program to focusing on students. Teachers will be encouraged to network with each other and to help each student achieve academic and personal goals. Staff development will be a school centered collaboration with input from staff and community. In addition, the Area Staff Developer from each of the four areas of the County will assist in leadership development. A District wide network and brokerage of resources is provided through the Effective Schools Unit (Dawson, Metzdorf, interviews).

The Role of the Principal

The role of school principal is pivotal. The principal has traditionally been responsible for leadership, management of the school, staffing, maintenance of building and grounds, and safety of children. With the new vision statement, the principal is asked specifically to support teachers and new philosophies instigated by administration, staff, and community. At the present time the process of selecting a principal is being reviewed and performance standards are also in review (Dawson, Metzdorf, interviews).

With the present shift toward cooperative decision making, many principals have been overwhelmed with an increased workload, diminished support from specialized resource personnel and increased emphasis on individualizing student goals. A mix of responses to the changes has been reported.

For example, one elementary school in the District is managed with a strong cooperative emphasis by teacher committees and the principal with sensitivity to the needs of the community. In this school 48 percent of the students qualify for the free school lunch program. Breakfast is served daily and the school

offers before and after school day care. The school population is mobile, and, to offset the constantly changing student body, many kindergarten, lst and 2nd grade students have the same teacher throughout a 2 to 3 year period. The team believes this provides stability for young children and maximizes successful learning--a major goal for principal and teachers. This school is one in which mobility of families constitutes a serious problem for both staff and children.

In another elementary school in the District, an equally committed principal and teachers believe that while process is important, the end product is what counts. Their school defines grade level expectations, demands mastery of skills and sets rigorous academic standards. The individual child is expected to achieve within these defined lines. Before- and after-school tutoring programs are offered to help students achieve these goals. After-school enrichment classes such as foreign languages, and teacher-directed clubs, are also offered. This school depends on parents as well as on the immediate community for support. A nearby church was tapped for volunteer tutors and the high school students from across the street have regular committments to tutor as well. Parents volunteer to help in a number of programs. This school draws students from the entire metro area.

Both schools are dedicated to involving the family. Home visits are made by the faculty, and parents are welcome to participate in school activities and to visit. With the encouragement of site-based management diversity within the District is possible in response to community need.

Changes for Teachers

Continuing education (inservice training of teachers) also has a new focus. Teachers are to become primary decision makers, with the support of the principal, in planning for each student's needs. Teaching will be evaluated in terms of results of learning, i.e. student achievement. In order to help teachers make this shift, a variety of seminars will be offered.

Teacher turnover rates have been low in Jefferson County. This means that new ideas will be implemented by teachers who have been with the system for many years. Most teachers are reported to be enthusiastic about the changes, others feel overwhelmed with the task of individualizing instruction in large classes, restructuring classrooms and goals, and feel that the community lacks information and understanding of the pressures on classroom teachers.

Some professional staff members feel caught between state mandated requirements, parental expectations, increasing class size, and the challenge of working with students who come to school unmotivated or unable to participate in the learning process. Some students come to school overwhelmed with unresolved problems which can be physical, emotional, social or a combination of all three.

Teacher performance standards are being revised. A draft of Teacher Performance Standards (Fall, 1991) lists four areas in which criteria are being developed to evaluate teacher performance: 1) professional techniques--art and methods of teaching; 2) professional preparation and growth--ongoing preparation and growth in subject matter, human development, teaching, learning and world context; 3) human relations--humane interactions that motivate and facilitate learning; 4) professional conduct--conduct reflecting responsibility and trust inherent in the teaching process (Dawson, interview).

An important basic issue is teacher training which is outside the purview of this study. Standards for teacher training are established at the university and college level by schools of education and are reflected in state regulations regarding certification of teachers. Goodlad and others have suggested that there is a basic problem in recruiting top-drawer students on college campuses into the field of education,

a need to emphasize content as opposed to methods in courses required for certification, and a problem of a system which clones itself through practices in student teaching (Goodlad, 1990). However, Jefferson County Schools have initiated an exciting, innovative new program called PACT.

Professional Alternatives Consortium for Teachers (PACT)

An innovative program, Professional Alternatives Consortium for Teachers (PACT), began in response to recommendations of former superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools, John B. Peper, in *Freedom To Excel For A New Century Generation*, 1984. PACT is designed to address the need for reform in teacher education. It is a Jefferson County program for teacher training in partnership with two universities: University of Colorado in Denver (UCD) and Metropolitan State College of Denver. Through this program twenty new teachers serve as interns while they complete a Master's Degree at UCD. Ten elementary school teachers are released from their full time classroom assignments to mentor the interns and to teach courses at UCD and at Metro State.

The District supports the interns through regular staffing funds and the universities support teachers from funds allocated for college course instructions. All parties to the partnership benefit from PACT. The Interns receive one-on-one help from a support teacher; the support teachers receive a unique opportunity for professional development; the District acquires a pool of well trained new teachers from which to draw; and the University and College benefit from instructors with classroom experience who teach education courses (Metzdorf, interview).

Two problems with the PACT arrangement are possible. A problem could arise if a principal elected not to select a new teacher from the pool because another candidate is preferred. The other issue concerns the teacher training question raised by Goodlad (1990): that in a system whereby teacher trains teacher the old system is perpetuated.

New Teacher Orientation

As part of the staff development program, new teachers are offered a half-day orientation program at the beginning of the school year in which they receive information about the teachers' association and resources available. In addition, a teacher mentor is assigned (usually within the same school) to work closely with the newcomer throughout the first year of employment. A day is also provided for mentors in-training to meet with the new teachers.

Staff Development Academy

Jefferson County Public Schools sponsor a professional growth program called The Staff Development Academy. The Academy publishes annual booklets detailing the wide selection of workshops, courses, support groups, study groups, and independent study offerings for recertification and college credit. More than 100 courses were offered in the 1990-1991 academic year in Primary, Intermediate, Middle, Senior, General, and Special Education. Also listed are for-credit courses taught within the District by local colleges. Some courses are advertised in the booklet by universities and by individual instructors. Fees for courses offered by the Academy for credit are nominal yet provide the direct costs associated with the courses. Since courses are often taken for salary advancement, the District offers no fee reimbursement.

Conferences, School Visitations. etc.

Staff development is also enhanced by the opportunity for teachers to attend conferences, professional meetings and to visit other schools. Requests by teachers to attend meetings are submitted to a committee which allocates money from a "teacher travel" fund. Some of the funding for this account comes from grants. Attendance is limited (as are funds) with usually only partial travel reimbursement given. Costs incurred include payment for substitute teachers. There is no formal procedure for information-sharing-follow-up after attending a conference. Sabbatical leaves providing full salary are yet another tool for staff development.

Professional Library

To "support the education information needs of the Jefferson County School Personnel" and "to provide resources and service that support the curriculum", the District maintains a large professional library which is also open to all residents of Jefferson County. The Professional Library Media Center in the Educational Services Center houses CD ROMS (compact discs) which include ERIC, Books in Print Plus, and Groliers New Electronic Encyclopedia. In addition the library has more than 10,000 professional books, 210 journal titles, and more than 300,000 documents. Computer software, art books and prints, sound recordings, and sheet music are in the extensive audiovisual collection. District art professionals have gathered creative subject matter displays for use in classroom projects including a collection of African masks, jewelry, and fabrics. Most District approved textbooks are available for use as classroom resource materials and most materials may be checked out for one month (Shea, interview).

The staff provides services to the District and to the community. Lists of new materials are published regularly and a computerized catalog of all materials is being completed. The Professional Library Media Center is an important resource for staff development.

ISSUE 3: READINESS TO LEARN

Goal One, Colorado 2000, states that "by the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn." Objectives are:

· *All disadvantaged and disabled children will have access to high quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school.*

· *Every parent in America will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day to helping his or her preschool child learn; parents will have access to the training and support they need.*

· *Children will receive the nutrition and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and the number of low birthweight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems.*

Background

Research indicates that children who attend good early childhood programs are more likely to complete high school, less likely to become parents as teenagers, and less likely to be held back a year in school or to need welfare services. One dollar invested in quality early childhood education is reported to save more than $4 in future spending on special education and in welfare costs (U.S. National Commission on Children, 1991).

Providing good "custodial care" is not enough. All early childhood education programs need to incorporate practices which are age-appropriate for young children and provide the experiences a young child needs to develop physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills. State regulations for early childhood programs define what is expected at a *minimum* level of service in Colorado.

The 1991 Report of the Denver Task Force on Early Childhood Education identified 12 key factors as integral to quality programs for young children: 1) small group size; 2) low child-staff ratios; 3) staff education and training; 4) curriculum oriented to child's learning needs; 5) quality and quantity of staff interaction; 6) parent involvement; 7) use of developmentally appropriate procedures; 8) continuity and consistency of caregivers; 9) good physical environment; 10) health and safety practices; 11) sensitivity to cultural diversity; 12) provision of auxiliary services (University of Colorado at Denver, April 1991).

Both the National and Colorado Associations for the Education of Young Children support the current interest in developing quality early childhood programs across the nation. However, both have taken issue with the concept of "readiness" in Goal One (NAEYC, November 1990). There is concern that this implies a dichotomy at a particular age of being either ready or unready to learn. Early childhood educators believe that infants are born ready to learn. Prenatal care, parent education, health care, good nutrition, and quality early childhood education programs are all needed if children are to be successful intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially in kindergarten and beyond. (Culkin, 1990; Colorado Children's Campaign, 1991; Elkind, 1984; Katz, 1989).

Children at Risk

There is a need in Jefferson County for quality early childhood education together with adequate health care for all children. In 1990 in Jefferson County it was estimated that there were 33,278 children 0-5 years of age and 116,169 under 18 years of age, representing 26.5 percent of the total population (*Selected Population and Housing Characteristics: 1990, Jefferson County, Colorado*, U. S. Dept. of Commerce).

Demographic information regarding some of the population at risk is summarized in the following table.

Table 1: Jefferson County Statistics, 1990

Live births	6,711
Teen births 15-17 years old	159
Low weight births	505 (7.5% of all births)
Births to unmarried women	949 (14.1% of all births)
Births with late or no prenatal care	183 (2.8% of all births)
Infant deaths (birth to 1 year old)	64 (9.5 deaths per 1,000 live births)
Neonatal deaths (first 28 days of life)	37 (5.5 deaths per 1,000 live births)
Postneonatal deaths (28 days old to 1 year old)	27 (4.0 deaths per 1,000 live births)

Source: Colorado Health Statistics, Department of Health, Marcia Blake, Researcher, October 1991

The increasing number of young children living in poverty is of critical importance to this discussion. Representative Pat Schroeder, in a speech given at the National Association for the Education of Young Children in November, 1991, stated that there has been an increase of one million children living in poverty in the United States from 1990 to 1991. She considered this increase to represent a national crisis.Two differing estimates of the percent of children in Colorado living in poverty have been made in 1991. The Children's Defense Fund estimate is 16.2 percent (in 1980 it was 11.5 percent) and the estimate of Kids Count is 17.6 percent (Colorado Children's Campaign, 1991). About 7 percent of the residents of Jefferson County live on incomes below poverty level, $12,100 for a family of four (Jeffco LWV, 1990).

Early Childhood Education Programs in Jefferson County

Jefferson County has a three-tiered system of early childhood education as do most communities in the United States. The system includes Head Start programs, public school programs, programs offered through the child care industry, and combinations of these programs. Some of these are specifically designed to assist children who are developmentally at risk and some are designed for young children who are not identified as being at risk.

An estimate made on August 28, 1991 stated that about 11,500 three and four year old children were underserved and that $31,510,000 in additional money would be needed to implement Goal One, readiness to learn. This amount includes $28,750,000 for staffing non-certificated personnel at $2,500 per pupil and $2,760,000 for leased classroom space at $240 per pupil year (Carle and Urschel, 1991).

Head Start Programs

In the 1960s the federal government launched a comprehensive program for young children who were judged to be at risk because opportunities for physical, social, cognitive and language stimulation were minimal and because routine primary health care was not available. Project Head Start was begun by the Office of Economic Opportunity as a comprehensive program for young children of low-income families. The four major components of Head Start include: education of the preschool age child (including children with special needs); identification of health problems and a comprehensive health care program (medical, dental, mental health and nutritional services); parent involvement; and social services to assist families (Head Start brochure, 1991).

In Jefferson County, federal funds for Head Start are administered through the Child Opportunity Program, Inc. of Denver. The administrative staff includes six coordinators who oversee education (including special needs), social services, the parent involvement program, the nutrition program, and the health program. Cost per child is estimated at about $2,100 (Duncan, interview).

The seven Head Start Centers in Jefferson County serve about 280 children three to five years old. The centers are located along the Sheridan corridor in Lakewood (3 Centers), Edgewater (2 Centers), and Arvada (2 Centers). Any family whose income is below poverty level is eligible to enroll a preschool age child but there is a long waiting list for enrollment in the Head Start program particularly in the northern part of Jefferson County (Duncan, interview). In 1990 it was estimated that in Colorado only 17 percent of at-risk children were enrolled in early childhood programs (Colorado Children's Campaign, 1991).

Each Center has a morning and afternoon session with twenty children enrolled in each. Sessions are 3½ to 4 hours long and meet four or five days a week. Each class is staffed with one teacher, one teacher's aide, and one community aide, who often is a parent whose child previously attended Head Start. In

addition there are weekly visits at each Center by a social worker, a psychologist, a speech therapist, a nurse, and a supervising teacher. The program is in session from September to May of each year. With the exception of a Center in Arvada, busing is not provided. The staff prepares breakfast and snacks for the children. Lunches are brought to the Centers by the Jefferson County Public Schools Food Service Department, at a contracted cost to Head Start of about $1.25 per child (Duncan, interview).

In May 1990 a Silver Ribbon Panel sponsored by the National Head Start Association stated: "Over the years Head Start has proven to be a significant and sound investment in our nation's future . . . [however] . . . over the past 25 years the percentage of children living in poverty has escalated at an alarming rate . . . [and] problems such as substance abuse and homelessness pose serious threats to child development and family life" (Lombardi, 1990).

Public School Programs

Even Start

The demonstrated success of the Head Start program over several decades led to discussion nationally as to whether providing a special program for 4 year olds was really early enough in a child's life to intervene. As a result of such discussions a project called Even Start was initiated in the late 1980s. Jefferson County is one of two school districts in Colorado to be selected to participate in Even Start and one of 76 national recipients of grant money for an Even Start program (Pratt, interview).

Families who live in a Chapter 1 school attendance area, have at least one child under 7 years of age and at least one parent who lacks a high school diploma are eligible for the Even Start program. The Even Start program in Jefferson County is called "Links to Literacy"(LTL) and was begun in 1989 and funded for a 4 year period.

The mission of "Links to Literacy" is to provide literacy training for parents, assist children in reaching their full potential as learners, and help parents to become partners in their children's education. It is an effort to break the cycle of illiteracy and empower parents to help their children learn. LTL serves 100 families and about 250 children. Funding comes from the federal government with an in-kind contribution from the District, the State, and collaborating organizations (Pratt, interview).

Chapter 1, formerly Title 1, is a federally funded education program that helps children who have fallen behind in their academic progress to catch up with their peers. Only schools with a higher than average number of low income families in the geographical attendance area are entitled to Chapter 1 funds. In 1990-1991, 34 elementary schools in Jefferson County qualified for Chapter 1 money . However, limited funds made it necessary to select just 19 of the 34 schools for Chapter 1 funds. Within a Chapter 1 school, selection of students to be helped is on the basis of educational need. *Any child* within a Chapter 1 school who has fallen behind academically is eligible for supplemental tutoring (Chapter 1 Brochure).

Half-day Preschools

The program of half-day preschools in Jefferson County began about 20 years ago and was called until recently the Parent Preschool Program. It is the oldest of the District's early childhood programs. It provides a tuition based program for three and four year old children together with a parent education component. Classes operate in ten District locations (see Appendix F). Any three or four year old child in Jefferson County may be enrolled.

In the 1991 Adopted Budget this program is described as 95 percent self-supporting on the basis of $50 a month charged per child in the half-day programs meeting twice a week, and $65 a month for the half-day programs meeting three times a week. Sessions are 2½ hours in length. In 1991, about 1,500 students and their families were served by the program. The budget for 1991 was $590,000. The programs follow the public school calendar.

Each school's program is licensed by the Colorado Department of Social Services and the teacher in charge is director-certified by the Department of Social Services and designated "director". The director is assisted by paraprofessionals ("teacher assistants") who are paid at an hourly rate. For example at Chatfield/Columbine where 335 children are enrolled in the half-day preschool program, the staff includes 1 director or "head teacher", 13 teacher assistants, and 2 office assistants. Class sizes range between 13 to 15 children per class. One teacher assistant (group leader) and one volunteer parent are assigned to each class bringing the adult-child ratio to 1 to 7.5 or less. Group leader qualifications require college-level classes in early childhood education plus experience in working with young children. Parent participation is mandatory with parents helping in the classroom three to five times a semester or making substitute arrangements. All adult participants must meet State Social Services licensing regulations for health and supervision. In classes where handicapped children are integrated, the special education staff is also involved in the classroom.

Full Day Centers

The Full Day Centers began in 1989 as a pilot program called the Language Development Preschools. In 1991 the program was expanded to become "Full Day Centers" under the supervision of the early childhood education component of the District. The program serves about 600 children including a special needs group and children described as "typical children". The funding comes in part from the Colorado School Finance Act (Colorado Preschool Project), in part from Even Start (Chapter 1, LTL) funds, and in part from tuition charged to 340 full-paying students. A half-day preschool language program is provided for about 240 four and five year old children identified as "at risk" for school failure. In addition, self-supporting full day programs are offered with day care available at the same site for children 2½ to 6 years old. Presently there are 9 such Centers which operate from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. all year (see Appendix F).

The 1991 Budget for the Full Day Centers indicates that $495,000 was funded by the School Finance Act, $543,000 came from tuition and fees, and $7,000 from the child care food program (Colorado Department of Health). The estimated cost for the total program for 1991 was $1,045,000.

The program began as a State grant and was included in the Supplemental Fund. "The program was transferred to the General Fund for 1990 to reflect the District's ongoing commitment to this program" (Jefferson County Public Schools, Adopted Budget, 1991). Expansion in the number of students served is expected to continue in the 1992-1993 school year. However, a significant number of at-risk students are still not being served.

Curriculum revolves around language stimulation for 4 and 5 year olds who need help in developing language skills. Criteria for eligibility include one or more of the following: child must be eligible for kindergarten in the fall of the year following enrollment in the preschool program; child has a bilingual, bicultural background; there is a parent history of drop-out and/or sibling drop-out prior to completing high-school; child has a sibling receiving Chapter 1 assistance; child comes from a low socio-economic background which limited or prohibited the child's attendance in a preschool program; child has a demonstrable delay in language (is slow to talk at an age appropriate level). Students who attend all day

must meet the age criteria only.

Staff consists of a coordinator, who receives 25 percent of her salary from this budget, one teacher on special assignment (TOSA), 9 directors, 32 specialists who participate in various degrees of part-time assignment, 25 "technicians", one part-time secretary and one teacher aide. Director salaries range from $18,713 to $22,723; program specialist salaries range from $6.52 an hour to $8.45 an hour; technician salaries range from $5.83 an hour to $7.27 an hour; teacher's aide salaries range from $4.78 an hour to $6.55 an hour. The range of salary is computed on a "step" model of 1 to 12 and has to do with time in service and continued education/training. Salaries for classified school personnel working at an hourly wage are lower than salaries for certificated teachers and professional staff.

In 1991-1992 as many special education preschool students as possible were integrated into Full Day Centers. The change is a consequence of a state mandate to educate handicapped children as close to home as possible and in the "least restrictive environment."

In December 1990, this program received attention from the private providers of child care centers who felt that the District was unfairly entering into competition with the private sector and eroding the attendance base of the private centers. Grievances were taken to the "West Chamber Serving Jefferson County" (a Chamber of Commerce). The issue was reviewed by a special task force and it was concluded that: "The R-1 School District's Language Development Preschool Program, in its present form and scope, does not appear to represent a significant intrusion into a service already provided by private industry." However, the task force indicated that it is open to new information (Chamber of Commerce Position Paper, 1991).

School Age Child Care Program

In recent years in response to demonstrated need, Jefferson County Public Schools began to provide before and after school child care. Before and after school child care (K-6) is offered at Molholm, Vanderhoof, Campbell, Allendale, Red Rocks, Lukas, Green Mountain, Glennon Heights and Martensen Schools and is operated by the District (see Appendix F). In addition, 8 private providers of child care operate 42 programs housed in Jefferson County Public Schools. The private providers include the YMCA, Red Rocks Community College, Ken Caryl Ranch, Foothills Recreation District, as well as child care business corporations. User fees of $1 per day per child (or 50 cents for an a.m or a p.m. program) are paid to the District and providers are responsible for "clean-up" after use of rooms and playground. Some of these programs enroll as many as 300 children so the payment to the District can be substantive. User fees are passed along to parents in tuition costs (Nelson, interview).

Private Sector Child Care

Within Jefferson County there are about 1,200 licensed Home Day Care providers as well as about 131 licensed, privately owned Child Care and Preschool Centers. Regulations for licensing are mandated by the State of Colorado. Licensing of Day Care Centers is done by the State Department of Social Services while licensing of Day Care Homes is done by the Jefferson County Department of Social Services. There is a shortage in the County of licensed facilities for infants and toddlers (Patton, 1991) but there are openings for children of preschool age in most Centers. Concern has been expressed by Center directors about losing staff and children to publicly supported programs. Pay scales for workers in privately operated preschools are low. In Colorado the mean starting wage for teachers is $5.02 per hour and $6.57 per hour for directors (Culkin, 1990).

Privately operated Centers report that they have to limit, for financial reasons, the number of children in their programs whose tuition is paid for by public funds. In September 1991, the Jefferson County Department of Social Services provided financial assistance for child care for 1,035 children from infancy to 13 years of age. The single parent, who has received child care vouchers from Social Services and who is working to become self-sufficient, can find that a pay raise of 50 cents per hour or less (if it takes her above the $7 per hour category) takes her off child care assistance eligibility. The consequence is to reduce her family income by between $200 and $600 per month, depending on the number and ages of her children (Hartman, interview).

ISSUE 4: EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

In 1975 federal legislation (Education of Handicapped Children's Act 94-142) mandated that all handicapped children from 5 to 18 years of age receive appropriate education. More recently Colorado legislation has mandated education for handicapped children 3 years and older. In Jefferson County there are also services available for some handicapped children under three years of age and their families.

Jefferson County Public Schools Exceptional Student Services offers programs and related services for: 1) hearing or visually impaired students; 2) physically handicapped students; 3) students who have a "significant identifiable emotional disorder"; 4) students who have a "perceptual communicative disorder" (learning disability); 5) multiply handicapped students; 6) students with a "significant limited intellectual capacity" (SLIC); 7) students who have speech and language disabilities; 8) students who have experienced traumatic brain injury; and, 9) students diagnosed as autistic. Each of these categories of service has been legally defined and mandated. It is the responsibility of each school district to implement the mandate.

A wide variety of services is available for handicapped students in Jefferson County. A student may receive services in his neighborhood school or in a special school which is equipped to meet his individual needs. Since the passage of federal legislation in 1975 which increased mandated services to handicapped children, Exceptional Student Services has expanded dramatically in Jefferson County as in other school districts across the nation. Federal and State money is not always provided to fund mandated programs.

In 1975-1976 Jefferson County served 1,236 special education students in self-contained classrooms (Roach, Jeffco Student Data Services). In 1991-1992 there were 7,946 students enrolled in special education programs which represents about 10 percent of the total student population. The total budget for services for exceptional students is $34,944,553 which is approximately $4,400 per pupil and represents about 10 percent of the total budget. However, the total special education budget includes some services provided to non-handicapped children. For example, school psychologists might work with a child experiencing difficulties surrounding a divorce.

Special education receives funding from federal, state and local sources. In 1989 the District received $8,246,198 in state reimbursement, however, in 1991 the expected amount was reduced to $7,850,000 which represents 23.5 percent of the total budget. The number of students served has increased while available funds have decreased. Eight and a half percent of the budget is supplied by federal funding and 68 percent is funded through local sources.

Goal One for Colorado 2000 has emphasized the importance of early intervention for both disadvantaged and disabled young children. The District has a Child Find team which does free developmental screening of children birth to 5 years of age in order to locate children who may be in need of services before they enter kindergarten. Additional assessment is done by the team and by the special education preschool

teams who work throughout the County.

Each family has the right to "due process" (defined in the legislation) which includes assessment by qualified professionals and a staffing adjudging the handicapping condition and determining program placement. Parents may select an advocate(s) to represent them and have the right to appeal any decision. Reviews of placement and progress are made annually.

The 1991 Jefferson County School Budget, page 134, indicates a total budget of $73,790 for the Child Find program. Items include salaries for a half-time resource specialist, a secretary, "additional pay" (no explanation given), benefits, printing, type-setting, editing, and instructional supplies. The salaries of the assessment team are not included under "Budget for Child Find" page 134. The estimated numbers of children to be served in 1991 (Budget projections) include: screening 650 students; assessing and staffing 400 students, with 200 of the children 3 to 5 years old eligible for state funding.

One of the options which might be recommended by the Child Find team is a special education preschool program. All of the special education preschools provide an opportunity for the students in the program to integrate with "typical" children of the same age. The special education preschool program is staffed by a teacher certified in early childhood special education, a teacher's assistant, an occupational or physical therapist, a speech/language pathologist, a psychologist or social worker, and a nurse. Itinerant specialists for hearing and vision are also available as necessary. All professionals are certified by the Colorado Department of Education and a majority of the professional staff have master's degrees in their specialty. All personnel are salaried according to the certificated salary scale. The total budgetary figure for special education *preschool* programs for 1991 was $956,890 with 250 children served. The teacher/pupil ratio is approximately 1 to 10.

Other options which might be recommended by the Child Find team include placement in the language development preschool or placement in a regular preschool with direct or consultative services from itinerant specialists. Infant-toddler services are available through cooperative programs arranged by the Jefferson County Public Schools and the Community Center Board.

The administrative structure of the Exceptional Student Services program is illustrated in Appendix G. In 1991-1992 administration of the Exceptional Student Services has changed resulting in dispersement of central administrators to each geographical area. This means that programs may vary from area to area, transportation patterns for busing children have changed, and specialized professional staff are no longer assigned to programs but to each of the four geographic areas. For example, the resource specialist who was responsible for speech/language, special education preschool programs, and for Child Find is now assigned to a geographical area as a general special education administrator.

ISSUE 5: ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

Goal Five, Colorado 2000, states that:

> *By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities to citizenship.*

In 1991 the Colorado Adult Literacy Commission published a report *Silent Crisis. Adult Illiteracy in Colorado* (Gonder, 1990). The report states that "at its most basic level, literacy is the ability to write one's name. But virtually no one who hires employees . . . accepts this rock bottom definition of

literacy". Accepting an eighth grade reading and math level as a minimal level for adult literacy, it is estimated that about 475,000 adults in Colorado are functionally illiterate, about the size of the population in Jefferson County (Romer, 1990).

"Colorado is a state of haves and have-nots. Colorado ranks second nationally in the amount of schooling the average adult has completed. Because of the state's large number of college-educated adults, the median education level is 12.8 years. At the same time, census figures indicate more than 400,000 Coloradans have not completed high school and more than 100,000 have not completed eighth grade. Because Colorado is one of a handful of states that provides *no state funding for adult basic education*, only about 6 per cent of persons who need help are receiving it" (Gonder, 1990). Dian Bates, Colorado Director of Adult Basic Education, states that "of the Colorado residents who have not completed high school, our adult basic skills programs reach only 6 to 10 percent."

In terms of education and earning potential, persons who obtain a GED certificate can expect to earn significantly higher salaries than those who lack a high school diploma or certificate. In 1985, the U.S. Census Bureau calculated the following projected wages for various levels of schooling:

Less than 8 years	$13,749
4 years of High School	$19,543
4 years of college	$30,391

There are six "alternative programs for high school completion", at McLain Community High School in Lakewood. The mission statement reads that "McLain is a vital, integral part of the educational community of Jefferson County, established to serve the unique needs of the adult learner. . . Students pursue educational and personal growth through . . . individual curriculum."

The first program is a "competency based high school diploma program" for a person 18 years old or above. It is an accredited program with academic requirements the same as in any other Jefferson County high school. Upon completion of the program a diploma is awarded. From August 1990 to June 1991, 1,133 persons were enrolled and there was a waiting list of 500. Students ranged in age from 18 to 65 years old. Of the 180 graduates in 1990-1991: 79 per cent had previously attended high schools in Jefferson County; 10 per cent attended high schools in one of a dozen other States; 8 per cent attended other Colorado schools; and 3 per cent attended schools in foreign countries. Forty-nine percent of the graduates were male and 51 per cent were female. The oldest McLain graduate to date was 76 years old.

Enrollment by age during 1990-91:

16-20 years old, 12.8%	35-44 years old, 15.3%
21-24 years old, 23.5%	45-59 years old, 6.2%
25-34 years old, 39.0%	60 & Over 3.2%

The budget allocation for 1991 was $604,208.

Each student is evaluated and an education plan is developed. Course credit is given when competency has been demonstrated. Classes are offered in 8 week sessions, mornings and evenings. Jefferson County residents over 21 years of age pay tuition at $40 per session. Non-residents over 18 years of age pay $80 per session. Tuition assistance is available.

The second program for high school graduation at McLain is the Alternative Co-operative Education Program (ACE). Whereas the competency based diploma program described above is for people over age 18, this program is an alternative for those 16 to 20 years old who have had an unsatisfactory high school

record and have withdrawn from school. This curriculum is academic, vocational, and experiential; a student must maintain a 90 per cent attendance record. There is an enrollment cap of 160 students and in September, 1991 there was a waiting list of 188 persons. If an individual does not complete diploma requirements by the age of twenty, he/she can move into the first program. The 1991 budget allocation for this program was $453,636.

The third program at McLain is for General Education Development (GED) test preparation and testing. A person can prepare for the test, take it, and if passed, use it as an elective credit. Enrollment in the GED program is a choice offered to students who are reading at about 9th grade level and who are enrolled in the competency based program. In 1990-1991, 2,108 persons were tested and 1,092 passed. There is no waiting list and the testing center is open to all Jefferson County residents. The budget allocation in 1991 for this program was $35,901.

A fourth program at McLain is the "English as a Second Language" (ESL) program. This is tuition free and aimed at assisting those whose first language is not English to function effectively in an English speaking society. Morning or evening classes are held at Central Lakewood School; an evening citizenship class meets at McLain; and more advanced classes meet at the United Methodist Church in Golden. Funding comes entirely from federal grants. The 1991 budget for the District ESL program was $672,024. The McLain portion for this program was $40,000.

The fifth program at McLain is "Project Literacy". This program is for the person with or without a diploma who reads at or below the fourth grade level. Many people in this program already have jobs but have difficulty because their reading level is low. Project Literacy depends on volunteers, is tuition free, and is funded mostly by federal grants with referrals coming through the Colorado Literacy Assistance Center. One-on-one tutoring is provided. Exact enrollment figures were not available. It is estimated that approximately 100 adults 18 years old and older were served in 1990-1991.

The sixth program is the Teen Mother Jefferson County Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Program (JCAPPP) located in a former cottage school facility in Arvada. This program serves pregnant girls (grades 7 through 12) and is funded by the school district. The 1991 budget allocation was $203,661. Students continue courses started in their assigned high school and can begin new ones as well. There are special courses in parent education and home management. Nursery care for infants is provided on the premises. The girls can stay for one semester (4 months) after delivery of their child. In September, 1991, 65 girls were enrolled and there is always a waiting list.

McLain School works with the Links to Literacy program (Even Start) mentioned earlier in this report. About 45 young parents were enrolled in September 1991 at McLain to work toward a high school diploma. The Even Start Grant pays for tuition, books, and child care.

In Jefferson County it is estimated that only a fraction of the adults needing instruction in literacy and basic skills are reached through present programs which are considered to be effective programs. A modest expansion of adult basic skills services for 700 additional adults at $750 per year would cost about $525,000 (Carle and Urschel 1991).

ISSUE 6: ALTERNATIVES TO PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

The opportunity to exercise freedom of choice is an intrinsic value in much of American society. Private schools play an invaluable role in maintaining educational diversity. However, debate is presently intense in some quarters regarding the pros and cons of issuing vouchers with public funds in order to expand

options for more families. This report will not attempt to evaluate the issues involved in that argument. At the present time, Colorado does not provide such vouchers.

In 1980, 4,350 kindergarten through high school students living in Jefferson County were enrolled in private schools. In 1985, there were 5,336, and in 1990-91, 5,634 (Scherschel, interview).

The Jefferson County Public School system recognizes the need for diversity and offers alternative educational opportunities at two schools, open to all interested students in the county on a space-available basis. One such school is the Dennison Fundamental School, K-9, which emphasizes basic skills in self-contained classrooms with strong teacher direction. There are 13 elementary classes and six junior high classes with central facilities for art, music and physical education. Ten "temporaries" provide additional classroom space. Students come from all attendance areas in the county. Curriculum emphasizes "intensive drill in the basic skills, regular homework . . . with accuracy, neatness, preciseness stressed. The school has waiting lists for kindergarten through eighth grade" (from *Realtor's Notebook, 1991*, prepared by the office of Communication Services, Jefferson County Public Schools for Realtors in the district).

Jefferson County Open School, grades K-12, features hands-on-learning, peer teaching and community learning. "The Open School is a school of choice by students, parents, and teachers who want an emphasis on self-directed learning and active participation in the learning process in and out of the school setting. Students work in multi-age groups based on interests, needs, and developmental levels. The staff works in teams and parental involvement is extensive. . . There is a waiting list for students interested in enrolling in the school" (*op. cit.*).

Home Teaching

In 1990-1991, Jefferson County records show that a reported 400 students were taught at home. The Colorado State Law requires children between the ages of 7 and 16 years of age to be in school but kindergarten is not mandatory in Colorado. In 1989, the Colorado Legislature added an amendment to the Compulsory School Law. It is known as the Homeschooling Law. Prior to this time homeschooling had been allowed in the state but the new amendment tightened requirements and shifted record-keeping responsibility to Colorado's 176 local school districts. It is probable that some homeschooling is not reported.

The law now reads that four requirements are necessary for homeschooling:

1. One must notify the school district of the intent to homeschool 14 days before the homeschooling program is begun. A form is filed with the Program Evaluation and Testing office. It must include the name, age and address of the student who will be homeschooled and how many hours homeschooling will take in a given day. There is no required curriculum.

2. Homeschooled students must be taught 172 days per year, a minimum of 4 hours per day.

3. When a student reaches the appropriate age for attendance in grades 3, 5, 7, 9 , 11 he or she must be tested with the Standard Achievement Test used in the school district. If a child's test scores fall below the 13th percentile, he or she must enroll in public school. Tests are evaluated in R-1 by the Program Evaluation and Testing Office.

4. Permanent records must be maintained as to attendance, testing, and daily activity schedule.

There is a wide array of activities and help for parents who choose the option of homeschooling. Curriculum fairs, newsletters, and workshops are available. Support groups for advice, problem solving, and sharing of experiences meet monthly. The Colorado Home Educators Association (CHEA) is a state-wide group that represents home-educator interests (Peggy McKibben, interview).

ISSUE 7: COMMUNITY/SCHOOL RELATIONS

In 1987 and 1990 proposals for mill levy increases were defeated by the voters of Jefferson County. In 1989 a proposed bond issue and a mill levy increase were defeated. The last time a mill levy increase for public schools was approved by the voters was in 1983. The last bond issue to be approved was in 1985. The defeats have raised a number of questions regarding the credibility, the financial management, community involvement and communication structures relative to the public school system. In the 1990 general election 55 percent of the registered voters in the County voted. In May 1991 an election for school board members was held and only 3.7 percent of the registered voters voted (Scherschel, interview).

Concerning the issue of credibility: "A credibility gap and a lack of trust in the system from both within and without currently undermine the district. The educational community resists the demands of the public and doesn't explain its position well. . . People look at test scores locally and nationally and think something is dreadfully wrong. . . As a result, school district and community values don't match" (Letter from office of Superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools to workshop participants and the School Board on September 24, 1991).

Concerning community structures: "In today's world, people are entrenched in their own lives and dealing with survival issues, which makes it more difficult to communicate. If we don't make information simple enough, they are overwhelmed. The general public simply does not know what is going on. . . We need two-way communication" (*op. cit.*).

Regarding financial management: "The community perceives the public sector as over spending and underaccountable. As a result, we're in serious trouble with taxes. . . Another public perception is that often the least competent have tenure" (*op. cit.*).

In terms of the community's involvement in the public schools: "With changing lifestyles and a smaller percentage of people having children in school, we are faced with apathy: People just don't care. We have lost family-to-family intimacy in the community" (*op. cit.*). It is estimated that about two-thirds of the households in Jefferson County presently have no direct connection with the public schools, a reversal of the demographic situation in 1970 (Carle, interview).

Innovative efforts on the part of the business community, in particular the Jefferson Foundation, discussed earlier in this report, indicate a strong commitment by the private sector to improving communication and cooperation within the District.

In the District's effort to include the public in the process of education, over 200 committees, councils and task forces have been appointed to work on issues of accountability, implementation of programs, and goal implementation. District citizens have been invited to serve on committees which include: District accountability committee, school and area accountability committees, the Certificated Personnel Performance Evaluation Council, local and county parent/teacher organizations, citizen textbook review committee, program advisory groups (such as the Preschool Advisory Council and the Links to Literacy Advisory Council), and curriculum councils. Some of these committees may be restructured depending

on task force recommendations.

An example of a "program advisory group" is the Preschool Program Advisory Council. It is composed of 22 participants with membership consisting of: 2 persons from Jefferson County Department of Social Services; 2 persons from Senior Resource Centers; 1 person from the Department of Health; 1 person from Head Start; 1 person from the YMCA; 1 person from Red Rocks Community College; 1 person from PTA; 1 Day Care Provider; 2 parents; and the remaining 11 are from the professional R-1 staff. Another example, the Links to Literacy Steering Committee has an advisory committee with a total of 38 members (see discussion of Even Start program).

Communication Services

Kay Pride, Senior Executive of Communication Services, writes in the August 21, 1991 *Columbine Community Courier*: "In the 1990's, it's clear that broad based citizen involvement is needed for us to do the best possible job of educating our children."

Questions have been raised about the level of public interest in the District schools. Interest seems to be low. There are negative feelings as well as widespread apathy regarding the problems the schools face. The former is perhaps a consequence of perceived mismanagement by the former school administration. The latter is perhaps a result of a community with other priorities. In addition, radio and television coverage of local education news has been meager.

The budgetary allocation for Communication Services in 1991 was $401,511 or 0.125 percent of the District's $320 million dollar general fund budget. Communication Services staff wants to broaden understanding in the community and among employees. The Cultural Diversity Committee is planning to address the needs of the growing Hispanic community and other minority groups in Jefferson County.

Vehicles for reaching the public include publications, videos and person to person outreach at meetings and community fairs. Publications include: *A Guide to the District; All About Learning; Annual Report to the Taxpayers; Shaping the Future* (information on task forces); *Messenger* (weekly information for employees), and miscellaneous brochures for special projects. A survey of public opinion in the spring of 1990 resulted in discontinuing the *Jeffco News* which will be replaced with information to local principals to be included in their school newsletters. *Tip Sheets* (items of interest about Jefferson County schools) and press releases are sent out regularly to 60 metro area media contacts.

Citizens have many avenues for input to the District including: letters, phone calls, testimony at Board meetings, interaction at community events, serving on formal committees/task forces, and at events at which District representatives give talks to community groups.

At task force or community meetings Communication Services is responsible for inviting "key leaders" from a list of over 700 active citizens of Jefferson County. The list is a cross-section of businesses, services, homeowners, educators, professions, service clubs, religious leaders, media, government agencies and elected officials. Invitation to participate in a meeting depends on the subject of the meeting and could relate to minority representation, specific interests or professional expertise.

Volunteers represent a valuable resource for the District. There is presently no volunteer coordinator on the District staff. Principals at each school are responsible for encouraging volunteer participation. The Superintendent is currently considering ways to support volunteer activities and the appropriate role for the District in this endeavor.

Parent Teacher Association

The mission of the Jefferson County PTA is "to advocate for the rights and well being of all children and youth and to promote quality education." There are about 22,000 members in 110 schools (1990-1991) reflecting an increase in membership over the past few years. Volunteers raise funds, donate items, lobby on specific policies, plan for special school events, and promote positive parent/teacher/administrator relations. PTA also serves as a forum for discussion and leadership training. Volunteer activities vary from school to school.

Nineteen PTA representatives serve on District committees. This includes the PTA President's position on the District Superintendent's Cabinet, a position created by Superintendent Finch. PTA representatives serve on accountability committees at each level--school, area, and district--and on task forces. Representatives also work with other community groups in support of the Vision Statement.

The County PTA has set five year goals in areas of membership, advocacy and leadership/organizational development. The County Platform addresses issues of parent involvement, student-centered goals, adequate funding for public education, high school graduation and employability skills, assessment of student achievement and raising expectations While continuing to support schools through parent education and involvement, programs for children, and fund raising, the role of the PTA is becoming increasingly issue-oriented (Anderson, interview).

Parent Involvement

What are parents in Jefferson County doing to offset the series of cuts following the mill levy-school bond election failures of 1987, 1989, and 1990?

One example of effective parent involvement is the Parent Association, formed seven years ago, at Golden High School. A committee which was formed to plan a party following the senior prom grew into a Parents' Association with a roster including 25 percent of the families with students in Golden High School.

Each August parents are asked to sign up for volunteer work. In 1991 four hundred did so. The volunteers: staff a counseling center and a speakers bureau; publish a newsletter; assist in the attendance office and at the switchboard of the general office; provide a student dropout mentor team and health clinic volunteers; sponsor career day programs and provide lunch on career day for volunteers; help with the booster club; and give professional job interview practice and scholarship counseling. The Association also plans a Back to School Breakfast and a supper during Parent/Teacher Conferences.

The Association does not have a fund raising committee. Membership is set at $10. Parents contribute additional funds as needed or make in-kind contributions of goods and time.

The scholarship information service has a volunteer staff of 35 parents who serve as a resource for the students. It was organized several years ago by a parent, Jane Hein. In the counseling room, a library of college catalogues is maintained, student profiles and scholarship information are computerized for ease in matching students and offerings, and 700 scholarship opportunities form a computer data base for effective counseling. The impact of the program (1986-1989) has been recorded with pride: the total number of scholarships granted to students at Golden High School has increased 48.5 percent in this three year period; the total number of college bound students has increased 16.9 percent; the number of more specialized or "uncommon" scholarships awarded has nearly tripled.

As a result of this success and in response to queries about the volunteer program, the volunteer staff of the scholarship lab organized the Golden Futures Foundation, Inc. The Foundation is a separate entity from Golden High School and sells the organizational plan for its scholarship program to other schools for $450. To date, 43 such programs plus data discs have been sold to other schools. Marketing out of state has begun.

Evaluating the scholarship and the volunteer program raises several issues. Obviously the program has been successful. In terms of the problem of confidentiality of student records, Golden High School does not permit sensitive information to be handled by anyone other than professional staff or a long term volunteer the staff knows well.

In regard to level of expertise and dependability of volunteer staff, parent training sessions have been instituted and multiple opportunities provided for staff/volunteer communication. In order to avoid volunteer staff burn-out and demise of the program when its instigators need to move on, a volunteer staff development program is in place. It is vital to the success of the volunteer program for administrators, counselors, principal, and teachers to communicate and form a supportive network (Bolig, Hein, interviews; brochures).

A final set of questions relate to respective roles of schools and community. If volunteers and volunteer programs are highly successful will it alter the responsibilities and roles of District and community? Should they be changed? The Golden High School experience has not as yet found that to be a problem. But if continued budget short-falls are in store, what should volunteer-parents be willing to do to pick up the slack? Golden High has found that having parents involved has made them the very best ambassadors for the school. Is there another side to that argument?

Jefferson County Education Association

The Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA) is an organization of teachers working in Jefferson County. The mission of the group is to support teacher rights and interests. The Association handles teacher grievances which may require arbitration and litigation. The Association represents 4,200 District teachers and employs a president, 3 professional staff members and two secretaries. The Association presently has a budget of $1.6 million. A major conference is held each Fall. Teachers working full-time pay $416 per year each in dues to the Association. Elected representatives from each school meet once a month with Association leadership (West, interview).

The President serves on the cabinet of the District Superintendent of Schools, which meets once a week, and meets personally with the Superintendent once a month. Four teachers representing JCEA are presently involved in the formulation of new performance standards for teachers in the District. The Association is also in the process of surveying the membership in order to determine new directions for the Association.

JCEA supports the changes taking place in the District and the new Superintendent. Cooperative decision making at each school is regarded as a positive challenge and a promising development in a district that has long been tightly centralized and managed. JCEA sees lack of adequate funding as the primary cause of problems within schools at the present time. The Association believes that problems of over-crowded schools with too few aides, and too many students per teacher (class size) can be remedied by increased financial support.

Classified School Employees Association

The Classified School Employees Association (CSEA) represents the 3,600 classified employees of the District and includes: secretaries; teacher's aides; mechanics; maintenance personnel; food service personnel; transportation personnel; and operations personnel. The purpose of the organization is to provide a unified voice for classified staff. CSEA negotiates and maintains contracts for the Classified Employees and Teacher Aides. The Association's budget is $215,000, and it employs 3 staff members and a part-time attorney (McNierney, interview).

The Executive Board includes all seven groups' presidents and vice-presidents. Each school has a CSEA building representative who communicates with the organization. A monthly newsletter, ***The Viewpoint*** is published as well. Current issues of concern to CSEA include: 1) community recognition of the value of classified employees in the District; 2) inadequate funding and its impact on staff and buildings; 3) defining lines of responsibility and authority; 4) additional training opportunities; and 5) inclusion of Aides and classified staff in staff meetings at the building level. The Association regards the role of the principal as pivotal in implementing shared decision making.

SUMMARY

The present impetus for change in the Jefferson County Public Schools began with the search for new goals and culminated in the Vision Statement adopted by the Board of Education. Many committees and task forces have been organized to implement the adopted visions and goals.

This report examined selected issues from among many possible problem areas related to education in the Jefferson County Public Schools. Topics such as accountability, staff development, readiness to learn, exceptional student services, programs for adult literacy, alternatives to public school education and community/school relations were discussed. The focus has been on significant changes which have taken place recently within Jefferson County Public Schools and which affect the quality of education in the District.

Presently the District is moving toward school-based cooperative decision making to enhance the ability of the individual school to meet local needs. Questions have been raised about how effective the new management strategy will be. Could a principal with a strong educational philosophy dominate and bias the process of cooperative decision making? Or could lack of strong consensus and leadership in decision making weaken a school? How can diversity among schools be encouraged while maintaining high performance District-wide?

In terms of accountability, will the process mandated by the State improve education and insure accountability to the satisfaction of local community members? Furthermore, in a diverse and largely but not entirely apathetic community, it may be difficult to reach consensus on goals. How difficult will it be to recruit people to serve on these committees? It may be some years before we can determine whether this system of multiple committees solves problems or creates new ones.

Implementing the change from program-based to student-centered education may require major shifts in methodology for veteran teachers and principals, which some may find difficult to adopt. At the same time, is the community ready to accept new techniques in the classroom? In addition, unexpected increases in the student population could make it difficult to individualize student education within large classes.

Important changes are taking place in early childhood education in Jefferson County. As discussed earlier, there is a project underway to focus on the developmental needs of preschool, kindergarten and first and second grade children. Research supports the effectiveness of that approach. On the other hand, legislative mandates to place handicapped young children in the "least restrictive environment" means that increasing numbers of handicapped preschool children are being integrated into early childhood programs. It will require time to evaluate the impact and outcome of these changes.

The public schools cannot be expected to addresss the problem of young children becoming "ready to learn" without the help of the rest of the local community as well as state and federal support systems. Giving every child a "healthy start" is a broad-based responsibility. In an ideal world that means providing universal prenatal health care, universal birthing and well baby care, teen mothers' programs in all high schools, parenting education, childhood health care and adequate nutrition. Societal changes and changes in the structure of the family have made it increasingly important to stress early-childhood programs. To what extent is this the school's responsibility?

In regard to services provided to exceptional students in Jefferson County, it may become necessary for the community to re-examine educational priorities. With federal mandates to provide such services and reduced funds to implement the requirements, problems could become crises."Federal law now forces local schools to pour resources into special education programs that often cost five times as much per student as regular programs, siphoning limited resources away from other needs" (*The Denver Post*, January 5, 1992).

In order for changes to be effective, both staff and parents will have to be included in advance planning. The staff in the office of Communication Services for Jefferson County Schools is presently engaged in an intensive effort to reach out to the community. Many schools have excellent volunteer programs in place and a study is being made currently of ways to broaden the scope of volunteer activity. However, can and should volunteers fill needs created by budget shortfalls?

District adult literacy programs are considered to be effective but reach only a fraction of the adults needing instruction in literacy and basic skills. A needs assessment for adult literacy has not yet been completed. Present estimates of funding needed in Jefferson County Public Schools for adult basic skills services for 700 additional adults at $750 a year is $525,000 (Carle and Urschel, 1991).

In a recent editorial in the *Denver Post* it was stated that "Colorado's schools are working as well as, or better than, any time in our history . . . [but] education is an area where no society can afford to be complacent." Jefferson County Public Schools are seriously committed to developing innovative solutions to problems created by legislative mandates and societal change. This report has attempted to highlight those responses as well as areas where problems exist. Community interest and participation, matched by a listening and responsive administration, is critical if adopted visions and goals are to be achieved by the year 2000.

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Urschel, Jane, President, Jefferson County Board of Education
Wells, Ruth, President, League of Women Voters of Jefferson County
West, Shermita, President, Jefferson County Educators Association

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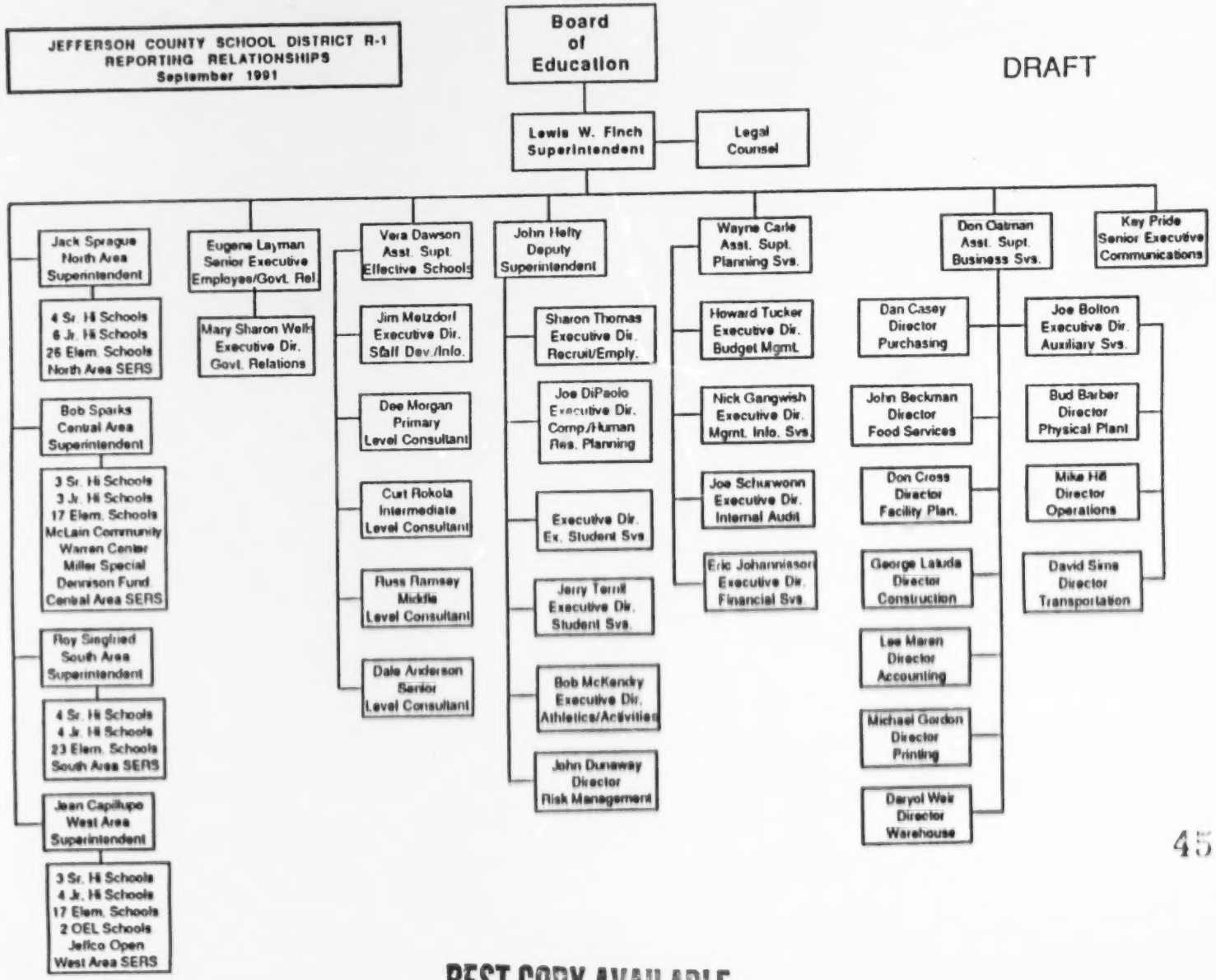
APPENDIX A


JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT R-1
REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS
September 1991
Board of Education
DRAFT
Lewis W. Finch Superintendent
Legal Counsel
Jack Sprague North Area Superintendent
4 Sr. Hi Schools
6 Jr. Hi Schools
26 Elem. Schools
North Area SERS
Bob Sparks Central Area Superintendent
3 Sr. Hi Schools
3 Jr. Hi Schools
17 Elem. Schools
McLain Community
Warren Center
Miller Special
Dennison Fund
Central Area SERS
Roy Seglried South Area Superintendent
4 Sr. Hi Schools
4 Jr. Hi Schools
23 Elem. Schools
South Area SERS
Jean Capilupo West Area Superintendent
3 Sr. Hi Schools
4 Jr. Hi Schools
17 Elem. Schools
2 OEL Schools
Jeffco Open
West Area SERS
Eugene Layman Senior Executive Employee/Govt. Rel.
Mary Sharon Welt Executive Dir. Govt. Relations
Vera Dawson Asst. Supt. Effective Schools
Jim Metzdorf Executive Dir. Staff Dev./Info.
Dee Morgan Primary Level Consultant
Curt Rokola Intermediate Level Consultant
Russ Ramsey Middle Level Consultant
Dale Anderson Senior Level Consultant
John Hefty Deputy Superintendent
Sharon Thomas Executive Dir. Recruit/Emply.
Joe DiPaolo Executive Dir. Comp./Human Res. Planning
Executive Dir. Ex. Student Svs
Jerry Terrill Executive Dir. Student Svs.
Bob McKendry Executive Dir. Athletics/Activities
John Dunaway Director Risk Management
Wayne Carle Asst. Supt. Planning Svs.
Howard Tucker Executive Dir. Budget Mgmt.
Nick Gangwish Executive Dir. Mgmt. Info. Svs.
Joe Schurwonn Executive Dir. Internal Audit
Eric Johannsson Executive Dir. Financial Svs.
Don Oatman Asst. Supt. Business Svs.
Dan Casey Director Purchasing
John Beckman Director Food Services
Don Cross Director Facility Plan.
George Lauda Director Construction
Lee Maren Director Accounting
Michael Gordon Director Printing
Daryol Weir Director Warehouse
Kay Pride Senior Executive Communications
Joe Bolton Executive Dir. Auxiliary Svs.
Bud Barber Director Physical Plant
Mike Hill Director Operations
David Sims Director Transportation

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APPENDIX B: The Great Value Shift
Prepared by Richard A. Caldwell

From the 1950s	To the 1990s
Saving	Spending
Delayed Gratification	Instant Gratification
Ozzie and Harriet	Latch-key Kids
Investing	Leveraging
Lifetime Employer	Outplacement
Neighborhood & Community	Lifestyle
Marriage	Irreconcilable Differences
Exports	Imports
Beer	Crack
Equity	Mastercard
Public Policy	Public Relations
Mom & Dad	Nanny/Day Care
Newspapers/Radio	Media
Bedtime stories	Television
Cash	Credit
Upward Mobility	Downward Mobility
Duty	Divorce
"We"	"Me"
Certainty	Ambivalence

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APPENDIX C
The Middle School: Unique and Transitional
Prepared by Paul S. George

Relationship of unique and transitional characteristics of middle schools to elementary and high school programs.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS	ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE	HIGH
Teacher-student relationship	Parental	Advisor	Choice
Teacher organization	Self-contained	Interdisciplinary team	Department
Curriculum	Skills via drill	Skills via exploration	Skills via depth
Schedule	Self-contained	Block	Period
Instruction	Teacher directed	Balance	Student directed
Student grouping	Chronological	Multi-age or developmental	Subject matter
Building plan	Classroom areas	Team areas	Department areas
Extra-curricular	All	Interest	Ability

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APPENDIX D
Belmar Elementary School's Accountability Plan 1991-1992

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - IMPROVING ATTENDANCE RATE

Goal: Maintain the average daily attendance rate at Belmar. Maintain attendance rate at or above 95% for the 1991-92 school year.

MEASURABLE INDICATORS OF STUDENT OUTCOMES EXPECTED BY MAY 30, 1992:

- Gather the data in the month of March by computing instructional days and averaging the daily absentee rate.
- Gather data from the official 20 day State of Colorado attendance count and compute the absentee rate.
- Continue to calculate attendance rate based on the ratio of attendance to enrollment for a random sample of 60 school days stratified by quarters.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - IMPROVING GRADUATION RATES

Goal: To improve students overall attitudes towards their school and school work.

MEASURABLE INDICATORS OF STUDENT OUTCOMES EXPECTED BY MAY 30, 1992:

The overall scores for students grades two through six on the School Attitude Measure (SAM) test will show an increase from 9-91 to 5-92. The appropriate targets for increase will be determined based on scores from the initial test which will be administered in September 1991.

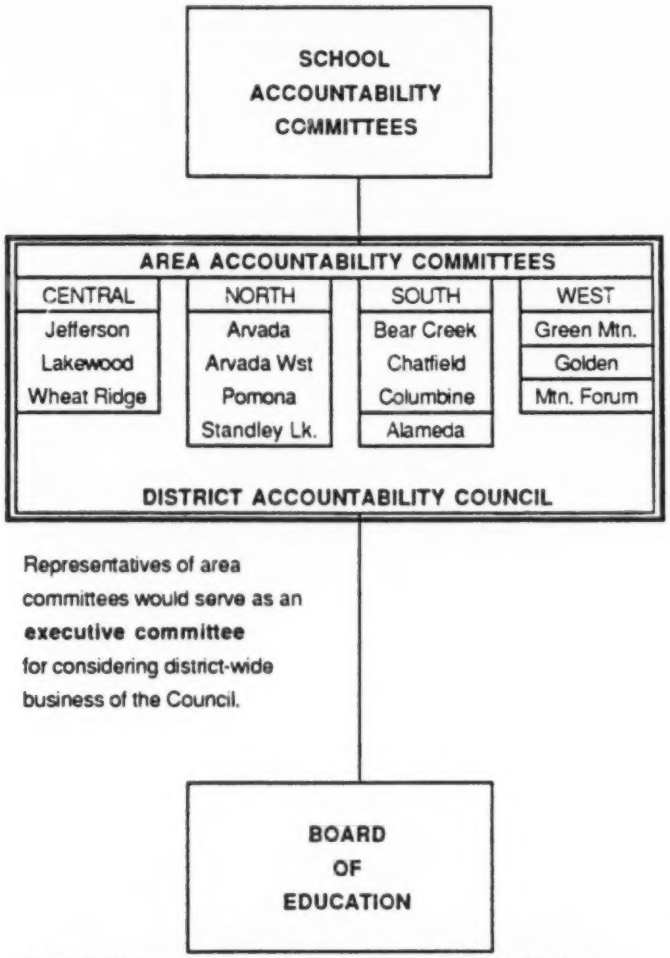
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Goal: In April 1990, third grade students at Belmar earned a mean percentile score of 55 on the ITBS Reading Comprehension test. The goal is to improve the reading comprehension skills of these students over a two year period of time.

MEASURABLE INDICATORS OF STUDENT OUTCOMES EXPECTED BY MAY 30, 1992:

By May 1992, these students (who will be fifth graders at that time) will demonstrate greater than expected growth by earning a mean percentile rank of 60 or more. The change in mean percentile rank from 55 to 60 represents a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest mean percentile scores. The achievement in reading will be measured by the ITBS Reading Comprehension score.

APPENDIX E
Accountability Process in Jefferson County Public Schools 1991-1992



Goal development, plans and progress reports would flow from schools to area committees, part of reorganized District Council.

APPENDIX F
District Services to the Young Child and Family

HALF-DAY PRESCHOOLS

Licensed two and one-half hour preschool programs, two to three days per week, for children ages 3(by September 15) through 5. Tuition waivers available to qualified families in need. Sue Shoaff, Contact, 273-6610

Arvada West (North)
Fitzmorris Cottages
6224 Johnson Way
Arvada, CO 80004 423-0798

Coal Creek (West)
11719 Ranch Elsie Road
Golden, CO 80403 642-7966

Columbine/Chatfield (South)
5977 W. Elmhurst Avenue
Littleton, CO 80123 979-5230

Open Living (Central)
Lakewood Junior High
7655 W. 10th Avenue
Lakewood, CO 80215 233-4878

Parr (North)
5800 W. 84th Avenue
Arvada, CO 80003 428-5661

Patterson (South)
Patterson Cottages
8870 W. Florida
Lakewood, CO 80226 985-0205

Swanson (North)
Swanson Cottages
6135 Gray Street
Arvada, CO 80003 423-5900

Warren Center (West)
13300 W. Ellsworth Avenue
Golden, CO 80401 ..... 988-7470 ext. 680

West Jefferson (West)
Little White School House
Conifer, CO 80433 1-838-5820

Wilmot (West)
Evergreen, CO 80439 674-7716

FULL-DAY CENTERS

Licensed, full-day services, 7 a.m.- 6 p.m., year-round for children ages 2-1/2 through 6. Free preschool for 4-year-olds (by September 15) who qualify.
Sherri Rose, Program Director
Debbie Schmidt, Assistant Director
467-5940 or 467-5941

Fruitdale Center (Central)
10801 W. 44th Avenue
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033 422-0569
Extended Day Kindergarten Services Available

Irwin/Green Mountain Center (West)
1505 S. Pierson Street
Lakewood, CO 80226 969-9704
Extended Day Kindergarten Services Available

Margaret Walters Center (North)
12265 W. 52nd Avenue
Arvada, CO 80002 422-1304

Martensen Center (Central)
6625 W. 45th Place
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033 421-0137
Extended Day Kindergarten Services Available

Molholm Center (Central)
6000 W. 9th Avenue
Lakewood, CO 80214 232-1916

Pennington Center (Central)
4645 Independence Street
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033 421-3843

Pleasant View Center (West)
15920 W. 10th Avenue
Golden, CO 80401 278-0169

Robert Welland Center (South)
3636 S. Independence Street
Lakewood, CO 80235 988-2549

Tanglewood Center (Central)
13950 W. 20th Avenue
Golden, CO 80401 278-4908

SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE

Before and after school child care provided at the elementary school to students K-6. Day camp programs offered throughout summer months. Financial assistance available.
Jan Hommes, Program Director, 273-6610

Allendale (North)
5900 Oak Street
Arvada CO 80004 467-5952

Campbell (North)
6500 Oak Street
Arvada, CO 80004 467-5945

Glennon Heights (Central)
11025 W. Glennon Drive
Lakewood, CO 80226 980-7758

Green Mountain (West)
12250 W. Kentucky Drive
Lakewood, CO 80228 980-7757

Lukas (North)
9650 W. 97th Avenue
Westminster, CO 80021 467-5953

Martensen (Central)
6625 W. 45th Place
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033 421-0137
Extended Day Kindergarten Services Available

Molholm (Central)
6000 W. 9th Avenue
Lakewood, CO 80214 231-2717

Red Rocks (South)
17199 Highway #74
Morrison, CO 80465 697-8738
Extended Day Kindergarten Services Available

Vanderhoof (North)
5875 Routt Court
Arvada, CO 80004 467-5946

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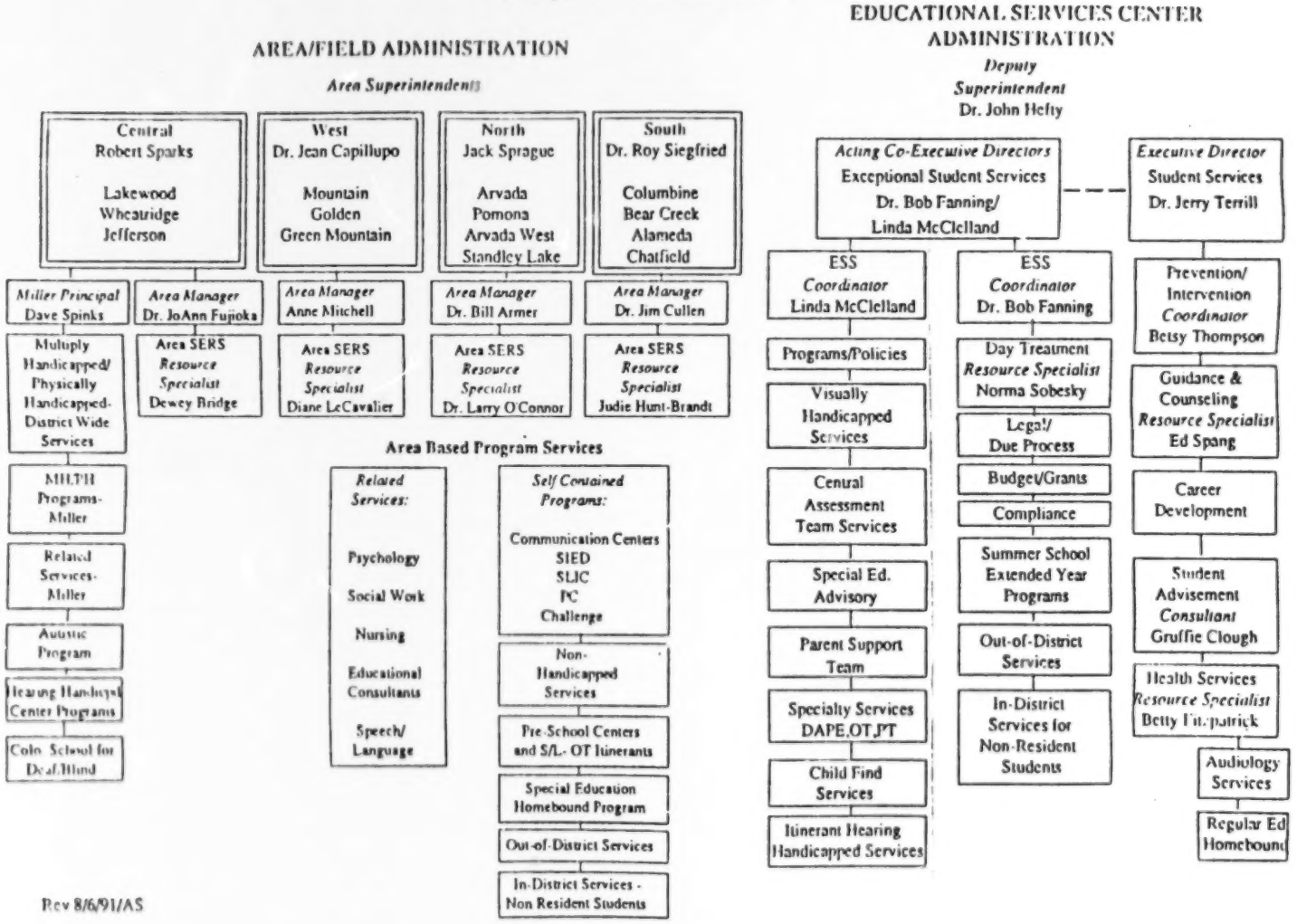
APPENDIX G
Exceptional Student Services Administration

JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Exceptional Student Services



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